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NUGÆ LITTERARIÆ.



# NUGÆ LITTERARIÆ;

OR,

BRIEF ESSAYS ON LITERARY, SOCIAL,  
AND OTHER THEMES.

BY

WILLIAM MATHEWS,

AUTHOR OF "GETTING ON IN THE WORLD;" "WORDS, THEIR  
USE AND ABUSE;" "ORATORY AND ORATORS,"  
ETC., ETC.

Un peu de chaque chose, et rien du tout, — à la Française. — MONTAIGNE.

Si on ne goûte point ces Caractères, je m'en étonne; et si on les goûte, je  
m'en étonne le même. — LA BRUYÈRE.



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## PREFACE.

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Six of the papers in this volume, viz. "Luck in Literature," "If!" "Spite in Text-Books," "A Plea for Pedants," "The Advantages of Debt," and "An Ignominious Destiny," have been published in the North American Review, and are reprinted here with the kind consent of Mr. Lloyd Brice, proprietor and editor of that periodical.

W. M.

BOSTON, June 24, 1896.





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## NUGÆ LITTERARIÆ.

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**Luck in Literature.** It is curious to note in the history of literature how many authors have owed their fame to a single thought, the chance inspiration of an hour. As there have been painters, not generally much above mediocrity, who have scaled the heights of excellence in a single picture, so there have been poets, ordinarily only second or third rate, whom a solitary ode or sonnet has lifted to the level of the masters of song. In some happy hour, some mental crisis, they have soared on the wings of fancy to a high heaven of invention; but when, flushed with confidence by their success, they have plumed themselves for another not less daring flight, and essayed to “dally with the sun and sport with the breeze,” they have “fallen flat, and shamed their worshippers.” There is hardly any cultivated man that has not at times brief visitations of fancy and feeling, when his mind is illumined by “thoughts that transcend his wonted themes, and into glory peep;” and if he has a talent for versifying, it is not strange if, after a thousand failures, he chance to make one lucky hit, and embody his casual inspiration in “thoughts that breathe and words that burn.” He must be a wretched marksman

who in a lifetime of trials has never once put a ball in "the bull's-eye."

Pomfret was a poet of this "single-speech-Hamilton" class. Though endowed with one of the most prosaic of minds, he yet chanced one day to blunder upon a lucky theme, and to treat it in a true poetic style. Dr. Johnson and Southey both declared that his poem entitled "The Choice" was the most popular one in the language; but, though it won boundless praise in the author's lifetime, who ever thought of wasting time on his other effusions? The life of his intellect seemed to run itself out in one effort; all the pure juice of the vine flowed into a single glass. The same was true of Lady Anne Barnard, who wrote the inimitable ballad, "Auld Robin Gray," but committed poetical suicide by a continuation; and, again, of an English nobleman, Lord Thurlow (not the great lawyer), who wrote early in this century a volume of verse, mainly doggerel, which was published with the title of "The Doge's Daughter," and ridiculed by The Edinburgh Review. Amidst the wilderness of nonsense there was a sonnet — addressed to a water-bird haunting a lake or stream in the winter — which was so beautiful as, in the opinion of an acute critic, to merit a place in every anthology of English sonnets.

Sir Egerton Brydges was another poet of this class. Had he written only his exquisite sonnet, "Echo and Silence," which Wordsworth and Southey so warmly praised, he might have been admired and envied, and all the world would have lamented that his muse was so chary of her favors. But his subsequent efforts dispelled the charm he had raised, and showed that he was indebted to fortune, not to a real poetic genius, for his success. Though he



devoted all his life to the most patient courtship of the muse who had flirted with him for an hour, she never gave him another smile. Akin to this was the case of Wolfe, who produced an ode that provoked universal admiration, and was pronounced by Byron one of the finest in the language. Had the author of "The Burial of Sir John Moore" published only those memorable lines, which have been declaimed in schools and academies and parodied oftener than, possibly, any other English verse, who would have suspected his poverty of imagination? As it was, his succeeding failures betrayed the secret, and showed that his inspiration was fortuitous, and not the result of natural temperament, — a flash of fancy only, not the steady blaze of genius. The first shot struck the very centre of the ring; the others could not be found.

Similar remarks might, perhaps, be made of Collins, not the author of the ode on "The Passions," but of "To-morrow," that "truly noble poem, . . . the climax of simple sublimity," as Mr. Francis Turner Palgrave, who places it in his "Golden Treasury of Songs and Lyrics," justly characterizes it. No one knows whether the author attempted to write any other songs; but if he did, they have passed, like his Christian name and all knowledge of his birthplace, into oblivion. Of Sir William Jones as a poet, what do we know beyond the lines beginning, "What constitutes a state?" or of Herbert Knowles, what more than that he is the author of the sombre lines written in the churchyard of Richmond, Yorkshire, beginning, "Methinks it is good to be here"? Joseph Blanco White was not a poet; yet, though English was to him an acquired tongue, he wrote a sonnet on "Night" which Coleridge does not hesitate to pronounce the grandest and most finely-conceived

sonnet in our language or, at least, as he afterwards adds, only rivalled in Milton and Wordsworth.

To these transatlantic poets may be added our own American poet, Woodworth, who had but one moment of inspiration, when the idea of "The Old Oaken Bucket" flashed upon his mind; and Key, to whom the muse once lent her fire, when he electrified his countrymen with "The Star-Spangled Banner," but was ever afterward grudging of her fine frenzy. Some forty years ago a young law student in Maine contributed to a newspaper which I was publishing a beautiful poem entitled "The Life-Clock," which was republished for some years in many different journals, sometimes with the name of H. W. Longfellow, sometimes with "From the German," attached to it; but though the author wrote considerable other verse, there was hardly a spark of inspiration in it all.

We have in this country scores of would-be poets who have each produced one or two creditable pieces which are to their other productions like Falstaff's "halfpenny worth of bread to this intolerable deal of sack." What can be more cruel than for the friends of these rhymers to goad them on to further effort, after it has become evident that—

" Calliope jamais daigne leur parler,  
Et Pégase pour eux refuse de voler " ?

Because, in a lucky moment, one has dashed off a few verses whose words are steeped in Castalian dews and "colored like the golden exhalations of the dawn," does it follow that he has "the vision and faculty divine" of the inspired bard? Who knows that he has the strength of wing for a series of successful flights, that he has not exhausted himself by his happy efforts? Carlyle says that



booksellers would get more for their money if they got less, — that is, if they paid for quality instead of for quantity. In like manner, it is better for a poet's fame to have produced a few good verses than a thousand mediocre ones; better one brief poem, shorn of all excrescences and condensed into power, than a myriad of diffuse ones, which are only "tolerable," and therefore "not to be endured."

**False Refinement.** FEW English words are oftener abused than "refinement." Fastidious persons, who are disgusted with what pleases the generality of men, and who demand that life shall be thrice winnowed for their use, are apt to plume themselves upon their superior refinement. No doubt there are certain sensitive organizations which suffer where coarser ones escape unscathed; but a tendency to magnify small annoyances is quite as common to little as to great minds. The Bible, speaking of certain Israelitish women, says that "they could not set the sole of their foot to the ground for delicateness and tenderness," — which is certainly not meant for a compliment. It is hard to see a true refinement in a selfishness which demands the best of everything, and is satisfied with nothing; which lays waste whole fields for a pineapple, and crushes a thousand roses for one fragrant drop. Mrs. Kirkland, in an admirable essay on "Fastidiousness," observes that, like other spurious things, that quality is often inconsistent with itself: the coarsest things are done, the cruellest things said, by the most fastidious people. It was a perception of this which led Swift to say, that "A nice man is a man of nasty ideas." Horace Walpole was a proverb of epicurean particularity of taste, yet not one of the vulgar persons whom he vilified had a

keener relish for a coarse allusion or a malicious falsehood. "Louis XIV. was insolently nice in some things; but what was he in others?"

Among the extraordinary instances of fastidiousness, that of Poppœa, who required a bath of asses' milk, and that of the princess who wept because in the lowest of half-a-dozen beds on which she was trying to rest a rose-leaf was doubled, are well known. It is told of one of the pupils of Verocchio, — Nanni Grosso, — that when dying in a hospital he rejected an ordinary crucifix presented to him, demanding one made by Donatello, declaring that otherwise he would die unshrived, so disagreeable to him were ill-executed works of his art. Miss Tyler, Southey's aunt, with whom he lived in his childhood, was so fastidious that she once buried a cup for six weeks to purify it from the lips of a person whom she considered not clean. Mrs. Kirkland tells of a gentleman who would not sign his name till he had put on his gloves, lest possibly he should contaminate his fingers; and of a lady who objected to joining in the communion at church, because the idea of drinking after other people was so disgusting.

Some of the most celebrated literary men and musical composers have been noted for their fastidiousness. The poet Gray manifested a morbid and effeminate delicacy, which was, in a great degree, assumed for effect. In spite of sickness and age, he continued to the last a coxcomb in his dress, which was of a finical neatness. Disliking to seem old, he refused to wear spectacles when his sight began to be dim, though at considerable inconvenience. Nothing offended him more than vulgarity, either of manner or sentiment; yet his own squeamish and overacted elegance was vulgarity likewise, but because it belonged

to an opposite extreme, and was that of the man-milliner instead of the rustic, he had no suspicion of the failing. Gray, however, was only one of many authors — from Aristotle to Bacon, and from Bacon to Buffon — who have been fastidious about their personal adornment. Buffon, in his study, was always arrayed in bag-wig and ruffles; Rousseau could compose only on the finest gilt-edged paper; and it was only in a laced suit, and with his finger sparkling with a diamond, that Richardson could portray Sir Charles Grandison.

Of literary fastidiousness, the most pardonable form is that which makes an author shudder at a misprint in his writings; yet this is sometimes carried to ridiculous extremes. It is told of an Italian poet, who went to present a copy of his verses to the Pope, that finding, as he was looking them over in the coach on the way, a misprint of a single letter, his heart was broken with vexation and chagrin. What if he had written for a daily newspaper, and found all his roses turned into *noses*, all his angels into *angles*, and his happiness into *pappiness*?

It has been justly said of fastidious people, that we need expect no delicate, silent self-sacrifice, no tender watching for others' tastes or needs, no graceful yielding up of privileges in unconsidered trifles, on which wait no "flowing thanks." "They may be kind and obliging to a certain extent, but when the service required involves anything disagreeable, anything offensive to the taste on which they pride themselves, we must apply elsewhere. Their fineness of nature sifts common duties, selecting for practice only those which pass the test; and conscience is not hurt, for unsuspected pride has given her a bribe." It is a fearful compensation of this form of selfishness, — for selfishness

it commonly is, under whatever delicate phrases and lofty pretensions fastidiousness is veiled, — that the sensitiveness thus indulged and petted becomes a tyrant, whose ever increasing exactions nothing can satisfy. The torment they inflict is vividly depicted in an entry in Byron's diary for Nov. 22, 1813. Speaking of the refinement of the poet Rogers's taste, he says: "If you enter his house, his drawing-room, his library, you of yourself say, 'This is not the dwelling of a common mind.' There is not a gem, a coin, a book thrown aside on his chimney-piece, his sofa, his table, that does not bespeak an almost fastidious elegance in the possessor. But this very delicacy must be the misery of his existence. *Oh, the jarrings his disposition must have encountered through life!*"

There is no doubt that delicacy is to the mind what fragrance is to fruit; and that the finest qualities of our nature, like the bloom on fruits, can be preserved only by the most delicate handling. But extreme refinement is false delicacy, and that only can be properly styled refinement which, as Coleridge says, "by strengthening the intellect, purifies the manners."

**Is Woman**      Who was it that first called woman "the  
**"the Weaker** weaker vessel"? Unless the phrase was  
**Vessel"?**  meant for irony, there never was a greater  
mistake. The very contrary is the fact. Not only is woman stronger than her fancied lord, but just in proportion to her seeming weakness is her real power. A little blond creature with dewy eyes and fragile form, whom physically you could crush like an egg-shell in your masculine grasp, is just the person before whom you find yourself crouching and trembling, without daring even



"to peep" in opposition to her will. She bends you to her ends with the merest minimum of effort; she moulds you to her purposes as clay is moulded in the hands of the potter. Woman's control of man is the eternal theme of literature, — the burden of biography, lyric, and romance. In one form or another, it is always Samson laying his shaggy head in the lap of Delilah, — the old lion allowing the fair maiden to draw his teeth and clip his claws.

"Did not the great Hercules lay down his strength,  
Spinning with Omphale, and all for love?"

Was not Achilles, — the terrible Achilles, *impiger, iracundus, inexorabilis, acer*, though he was; he who

"All covenants would still disown,  
And test his quarrel by the sword alone;"

he whose mere shout alone made the horses of Troy tremble in their shoes, foreseeing the sorrows which that shout implied; the Swift-footed himself, who slew the Horse-tamer; was not even he conquered by the gentleness of the fair Briseis? And when he was robbed of her by the leader of the Greeks, did he not stalk ireful and moody by the shores of the many-sounding sea, and mingle his briny tears with "the ocean wave"?

There was possibly a time before man emerged from the savage state, when woman might have been "the weaker vessel;" but to call her so to-day, when with absolute self-reliance she preaches in the pulpit, argues in the courts, performs surgical operations, harangues on the platform, wins "double-firsts" at universities, holds political conventions, organizes parties, and outwits and defeats even the Jesuits at the polls, — when a woman (Mrs. Livermore)

travels during a hot fortnight in August 4,500 miles, and delivers eleven lectures at Chautauqua, besides speaking during the same brief time at several conferences on temperance, woman suffrage, nationalism, and physical culture, — to call such a being “weak” is to be guilty at once of an anachronism, a misnomer, and a libel.

**If!** A NEWSPAPER writer, speaking of the late Thomas J. Potter, who as general manager of the Union Pacific Railway received an annual salary of \$40,000, says that he began his career twenty-five years ago as a lineman on an Iowa railway at \$45 per month. “He worked his way up,” it is added, from the latter position to the former; “and there is not a young man on any railroad in the United States for whom the same result is not possible, if he should put into his work the same amount of brains and zeal which Mr. Potter did.”

How inspiring! What a trumpet-call to young railway employees to become, one and all, presidents of great lines, and the recipients of yearly salaries each one of which is in itself a fortune! “*If* he should put into his work,” etc. No doubt; and “*if* my aunt had been a man, she would have been my uncle.” It is just and only that provoking “*if*,” reader, that prevents a beggar from becoming a Rothschild, or you and me from rivalling Webster at the bar, Gladstone in the senate, or Scott and Dickens in fiction. “*If*” is a very small word, a monosyllable of two letters only; yet how immense is that “*if*”! Thousands of persons who now languish in obscurity would astonish the world, were they not, like Mirabeau in his youth, confined in the castle of *If*.

“If I but had an opening,” sighs many a young man in

these days of overcrowded professions and multiplying competitors for office and place, "the world should see what I can do." "If I but had an opening!" as if the very seal and sign of ability — the essential difference between it, or genius, and dilettantism — were not a regal superiority to the "openings" and "opportunities" which so many aspirants to wealth or honor make a condition of success. The successful man is the one who *made* a way when he could not find one; who made the adverse circumstances, over which others were moaning, the ministers and aids to his advancement, instead of becoming their slave. The difficulties which disheartened them only stiffened his sinews; the block of granite which was an obstacle in their pathway became a stepping-stone in his.

A lad of twelve years of age, who already played the piano very skilfully, once said to Mozart: "Herr Kapellmeister, I should very much like to compose something. How am I to begin?"

"Pho, pho," said Mozart, "you must wait."

"But you," said the boy, "composed much earlier."

"Yes," replied Mozart, "but *I asked nothing about it*. If one has the spirit of a composer, *one writes because he cannot help it*."

On another occasion, writing in reply to a friend who had asked about his way of composing music, he names certain occasions when his ideas flow best and most abundantly, and adds: "*Whence and how they come I know not, nor can I force them. . . . Why productions take from my hand that particular form and style which makes them Mozartish, and different from the works of other composers, is probably owing to the same cause which renders my nose so and so, large or aquiline, or, in short,*

makes it Mozart's and different from those of other people, for I really *do not study to aim at any originality.*"

The letters of Dickens show that it was in a similar way that he wrote those wondrous novels of his that enchant the world. When a new creation was about to rise from the ocean-depths of thought, he did not go about asking advice, or gird up his literary energies by a prodigious effort of the will, but, to use his own language about "The Chimes," "all his affections and passions got twined and knotted upon it;" he went wandering about at night into the strangest places, "possessed," spirit-driven, a prophet commissioned to utter the life-giving word to men's souls, and finding no rest until he uttered it. So, though rarely perhaps in the same degree, with the eminent men, the great leaders, in almost every calling: they chose their respective pursuits, if they can be said to have chosen them, not because those pursuits promised the most money, fame, or happiness, but unconsciously, because they could not help it; and they succeeded, not because they resolved with an intense, continuous act of volition to do such and such things, but because they were impelled by a great, prevailing, paramount desire, which engulfed all lesser desires, to do them.

No doubt there is a will that makes the man; but if it is not inborn, it cannot be put into him, and it needs no prompting. To tell a young man that he can become a millionaire, a railroad king, etc., *if* he will put into his work the same amount of brains and zeal as A or B did before *he* became a millionaire or railroad king; is the veriest drivel. It is equivalent to saying that he will become a Samson if he will only put forth a Samson's strength; or that if an astronomical student will put into



his work the mental energy, the spiritual force, of Newton, he will do as great things as Newton, — which is not a very stimulating statement, if it be true. How strangely men persist in regarding moral qualities as habits merely, and not gifts! The will is a natural endowment as well as the mental faculties, and to want it is as bad as to want mental power.

**The Virtues of Sunlight.** WHY is it that in this age of cures, — grape-cures, movement-cures, faith-cures, etc., which are lauded as panaceas for all the ills that flesh is heir to, — so few persons avail themselves of that best and cheapest antidote to disease, as well as cure of it in many cases, the sun-cure? The love of sunshine is one of our strongest instincts; yet cats and dogs, which have it also, follow it more intelligently than men and women. No man ever basked in the sunshine on a bright, sparkling morning, without feeling and being the better for it; yet how few of us avail ourselves of the wealth of sunshine that is poured out so lavishly all around us! We all understand the effects of the withdrawal of sunlight from plants in winter; but it is too often forgotten that through its short, gloomy days the human body suffers in the same way as vegetation, and therefore requires the therapeutic agency of sunshine to repair its wasted forces. Dr. Bell, in his work on Climatology, observes that the free action of light favors nutrition and regularity of development, and contributes to beautify the countenance; while a deficiency of light is usually characterized by ugliness, rickets, and deformity, and is a fruitful source of scrofula and consumption.

The sun-cure, we believe, is not found in rooms glazed with blue-glass (though even that craze had a truth under-

lying it), but out of doors. If we cannot get it at home, we must seek it where the skies are blue and the breezes balmy, — in Florida, or Southern California, or the Riviera, or sunny Italy. With time and means, it is now as easy to bathe in delicious and vivifying sunlight all the year round as it was for Naaman to leave his leprosy in the waters of Jordan. Thanks to the iron horse and magnificent steamships, we can follow the sun in his southward sweep, and compel him to a perennial summer. Thus Doctor Sunshine is always at call, and men the world over are becoming more and more disposed to put faith in his simple and natural remedies.

Rome's charming lyrist, Horace, tells us in his address to his book (Epist. xx. 20) that he was "solibus aptus," — fond of basking in the sun, — and therefore loved to live at Tarentum, in the extreme south of Italy, in the winter. The sun was always the poet Gray's physician, and without its "soveran vital lamp," life, he said, would often have been intolerable to him. It is said of Le Sage, the author of "Gil Blas" (that charming story of which Macaulay said that he was never tired), that in his declining years, when his faculties were fast dying out, he became singularly dependent upon the sun: when that luminary appeared, and so long as it was climbing to the zenith, the lively author grew brighter and brighter; but from noon to sunset his powers underwent a gradual and perceptible obscuration. The biography of Brighton's brilliant preacher, Rev. F. W. Robertson, tells us that he basked and seemed to live more vividly in broad sunshine; it made all the difference between rapidity of thought, ease of arrangement, in preparing his sermons, and laborious failure, whether he wrote or not in a room facing the south.

Joseph Dennie, the delightful "Lay Preacher," — of whom, as a native of this city, every Bostonian should be proud, — declared that "the sun is the poet's, the invalid's, and the hypochondriac's friend." A slave to gloom in winter, he in April and May, under the potent influence of sunshine, gave care to the winds.

There are some persons who fully appreciate the benevolent agency of "old Sol" in winter, yet seem not to be aware that his vivifying beams are even more essential to health in summer. The exhalations from our bodies in warm weather are more copious than in cold, and the sun's rays are more needed, — just as disinfectants are more needed in the former season than in the latter. The magical effects of sunlight upon human health and spirits are felt by thousands who hardly think of the cause. The rays of heat quicken the vital powers, the chemical rays exert their mysterious and potent influence, and the illuminating rays, independently of the others, communicate motion. To shut the light from our homes is to banish the most efficient of all agents in destroying what is detrimental to health and life. The noxious vapors, which the free admission of air and sunlight would remove, are absorbed by carpets, wall paper, and upholstery, and generate disease. But why multiply proofs? Who has not noticed the contrast of the pallid faces, flaccid muscles, and nerveless movements of those persons who live in dark and consequently damp rooms, with the rosy looks and bounding energy of those who pass their days in the open air? The owl loves the twilight and the night; the eagle delights in the sunshine. What a miserable mope is the one; how strong-winged and exultant is the other! More persons die, it is said, on the north than on the south side

of hospitals, — more persons on the shady side of the street than on the sunny one. Typhoid and kindred diseases have sometimes raged on the former side, while the latter has been exempt.

Who can wonder that the Persians once worshipped the sun? Why is Italy, with its shocking sanitation, so healthful? Because it is flooded with sunlight. Were it as sunless as England, it would be as unfit for human habitation as a pest-house. What a trumpet-tongued testimony is this to the poison-destroying, health-giving power of “old Sol”? It is now well known that the germs of those deadly diseases, scarlet fever, diphtheria, and typhoid, are utterly destroyed by vivid sunlight. Who can doubt that one of the prime benefits which invalids derive from a winter sojourn at Alpine or tropical resorts is due to the profuse sunshine enjoyed in them?

**Old Women.** COLERIDGE is reported as saying that there were three classes into which all the women past seventy, that ever he knew, were to be divided : 1. That dear old soul ; 2. That old woman ; 3. That old witch. It must have been to the first-named class that a later writer refers, when he says, that with the exception of a young one, there is nothing in the world so charming as an old woman. We agree with him, — only, we would omit the exception, — provided she is a genuine old woman, without affectation ; one who has grown old gracefully, and who does not try to hide “ the sere and yellow leaf ” by aping the dress, airs, and manners of the spring-time of life. Montaigne has said, alas ! too truly, that old age is apt to impress as many wrinkles on the mind as on the body ; and there are few men or women advanced to that stage of life, “ *qui ne*



sent pas l'aigre et le moisi." Yet such a gray-haired woman as we have named may be a charmer, even though as old as the "Old Countess of Desmond," who, according to one tradition, lived to the age of one hundred and ten years, and, according to another, to one hundred and sixty-two, and might have lived a score or two more, so great was her genius for longevity, had she not fallen from a cherry-tree, as thus chronicled by a merry bard: —

"Ay, as old

As that Countess of Desmond, of whom I've been told  
That she lived to much more than a hundred and ten,  
And was killed by a fall from a cherry-tree then!  
What a frisky old girl!"

Is it not an interesting and noteworthy circumstance, that most of the ancient heroes, as well as most modern philosophers and poets, have manifested a predilection for the society of old women? The ancient heroes, as was the custom of their day, showed their veneration to their nurses; the modern philosopher and poet, to an aged mother, sister, or friend, in whose wrinkled countenance they have beheld the reflection of eternity. Molière's — the melancholy Molière's — old woman will be forever associated with his name; and so will Cowper's Mrs. Unwin, as well as the mother on seeing whose picture he wrote his most touching verse. Pope gloried in rocking the cradle of age for a parent who appears to have struck the Horeb-like rock of even his selfish soul, till the tenderness gushed forth. Johnson, infirm and poor, had a companion still more infirm and poor, and blind withal, in old Mrs. Williams; Northcote had his sister; and Calvin, the rigid theologian, was always gentle and yielding to his old mother. Even De Maistre, the stern Ultramontanist, who

championed the Inquisition, and maintained that war and the gallows are the two poles on which society revolves, worshipped his aged mother, — his *sublime mother*, as he called her, “an angel,” he said, “to whom God had but lent a body;” and, to descend to later times, when did Wordsworth’s genius ever pour more liquid music into the sonnet (of which, after Milton, he was the greatest master), than in these lines “to a lady in her seventieth year”? —

“Such age, how beautiful! O lady bright,  
 Whose mortal lineaments seem all refined  
 By favoring nature and a saintly mind  
 To something purer and more exquisite  
 Than flesh and blood; whene’er thou meet’st my sight,  
 When I behold thy blanced, unwithered cheek,  
 Thy temples fringed with locks of gleaming white,  
 And head that droops because the soul is meek, —  
 Thee with the welcome snowdrop I compare,  
 That child of winter, prompting thoughts that climb  
 From desolation toward the genial prime;  
 Or with the Moon, conquering earth’s misty air,  
 And filling more and more with crystal light  
 As pensive Evening deepens into Night.”

**Evil chastises** THAT eminently thoughtful and suggestive  
**Itself.** writer, Henri-Frédéric Amiel, closes in his  
 “Journal” some remarks on the purification of society  
 from its corruptions, which resulted from the descent of  
 that “scourge of God,” Genghis Khan, and his yellow,  
 flat-nosed Mongols, upon Europe, with the following striking  
 reflections, which appear to us singularly applicable to  
 the recent anti-Italian outbreak of popular fury at New  
 Orleans: “The Quakers will not see that there is a law of  
 tempests in history as in Nature. . . . Civilization tends  
 to corrupt men, as large towns tend to vitiate the air. ‘Nos

patimur longæ pacis mala.' Catastrophes bring about a violent restoration of equilibrium; they put the world brutally to rights. Evil chastises itself, and the tendency to ruin in human things supplies the place of the regulator who has not yet been discovered. No civilization can bear more than a certain proportion of abuses, injustice, corruption, shame, and crime. When this proportion has been reached, the boiler bursts, the palace falls, the scaffolding breaks down; institutions, cities, states, empires, sink into ruin. The evil contained in an organism is a virus which preys upon it, and, if it is not eliminated, ends by destroying it."

**Spite in Text-Books.** INTENSELY bitter as are some men's political prejudices, it seems scarcely credible that they would find expression in scientific treatises and text-books; yet so they have in several notable instances. Dr. Johnson could not refrain from letting his bile overflow into his dictionary, as we see by his definitions of "excise" and "pension." The former is defined to be "a hateful tax levied upon commodities, and adjudged, not by the common judges of property, but wretches hired by those to whom excise is paid;" and "pension," to be "an allowance made to any one without an equivalent. In England it is generally understood to mean pay given to a state hireling for treason to his country." One of the last places in which one would expect to meet with such an exhibition of temper is among the dispassionate definitions of a dictionary; and the Doctor would hardly have been betrayed into it had he dreamed that, only a few years later, he himself would accept a pension from George III.

But Johnson, "a good hater," though he was an ultra

Tory, has been surpassed by William Cobbett. In his English grammar, Cobbett contrives skilfully to drag in his political opinions, not occasionally, but again and again, and makes his examples and illustrations subservient to his likes and dislikes on almost every page. Thus, as an example of the time of an action expressed by a verb, he gives this: "The Queen [Queen Caroline] *defies* the tyrants, the Queen *defied* the tyrants, the Queen *will defy* the tyrants." To illustrate the hyphen, we have: "the never-to-be-forgotten cruelty of the borough tyrants;" under the possessive case: "Oliver the Shy's evidence, Edwards the government's spy." Nouns of number and multitude are thus grouped together: "Mob, Parliament, Rabble, House of Commons, Court of King's Bench, den of thieves, and the like." "You may use," he tells his pupil, "either a singular or plural verb with a noun of multitude, but you must not use both numbers in the same sentence. You may say, for instance, of the House of Commons, '*they* refused to hear evidence against Castle-reagh, when Mr. Maddox accused him of having sold a seat;' or, '*it* refused to hear evidence.' It is wrong to say: 'Parliament *is* shamefully extravagant, and *they are* returned by a gang of rascally borough-mongers.'" As a specimen of faulty syntax, Cobbett gives: "The Attorney-General Gibbs, whose malignity induced him to be extremely violent, and was listened to by the judges."

But the bitterness of Johnson's, and even of Cobbett's, political prejudice pales before that of General Hill, the Confederate officer, as manifested in a text-book published by him just before the late Civil War. There are few persons whose ingenuity would not be puzzled and baffled in an attempt to introduce sectional feelings and personal



spite into the neutral region of pure mathematics; but General Hill actually succeeded in conveying covert sneers by algebraical symbols, and insinuating contempt through mathematical problems. In a text-book called the "Elements of Algebra," strongly recommended by Professor Jackson of the Virginia Military Institute (afterward the famous rebel general, "Stonewall" Jackson), a number of problems are given, of which the following are specimens:—

"A Yankee mixes a certain number of wooden nutmegs, which cost him one-fourth of a cent apiece, with real nutmegs worth four cents apiece, and sells the whole assortment for \$45, and gains \$3.75 by the fraud. How many wooden nutmegs were there?"

"At the Woman's Rights Convention, held at Syracuse, N. Y., composed of one hundred and fifty delegates, the old maids, childless wives, and bedlamites were to each other as the figures of 7 and 3. How many were there of the old maids?"

**Names vs. Things.** THE "Vermont Chronicle," a conservative orthodox journal, said some years ago, — with, we fear, too much truth, — that "there are a great many people who are more afraid of saying that hell is not eternal, than they are of the eternity of hell. You will find a man who, in his business all through the week, in his weights and measures, in his gossip and small talk, has not the least fear of justice and eternal retribution, but will shake in his shoes on Sunday at the saying that hell is not eternal." How full of such inconsistencies is poor human nature, regarding not only religion, but morality and politics! It is said that there are political pedants

who are so enamoured of a name that they would fret at being subjects of a monarchy administered in the best spirit of a republic, and glorify themselves on being citizens of a republic administered in the worst spirit of a monarchy. So, again, in the religious world, there are sticklers for orthodoxy, who, like the dying artist that scornfully rejected the supreme rites of his church because the crucifix presented to him violated the rules of art, will scowl at doctrinal sentiments which are saturated with the orthodox spirit because they are not couched in the technical orthodox language. Like the good woman who deemed tartar emetic very bad for children, saying that she should not for a moment think of giving it to her own, but always gave them antimonial wine (the selfsame thing), these ultra-orthodox persons are horror-struck at the very theological sentiments which they themselves cherish, when those sentiments are couched in any other language than an old, worn-out, effete, conventional technology, which was fit enough in its day, but out of which the meaning has long ago been emptied.

A vivid example of this kind of human folly once occurred in the history of Rome. So long as Julius Cæsar, after he had reached the summit of power, refrained from assuming the insignia of kingly authority, the Romans allowed him as Imperator, Dictator, and Præfectus Morum, to enjoy all its substantial prerogatives. But when, during the Circensian games, his statue was borne in the procession with those of the divinities; when he assumed the royal wreath and the regal buskins, and exhibited an armed Venus upon his signet, while guards attended upon his person, — the daggers were unsheathed against which his veteran bands and unequalled military genius could give

him no protection. He had been suffered to shed with impunity the best blood of Rome, and to trample on her laws and liberties ; but as men are roused and exasperated more by the symbols than by the substance of tyranny, it was only when he assumed the badges of kingly authority that his countrymen lost their patience, and plunged their daggers in his bosom.

**Greed of Praise.** THE greed of praise which some writers betray in our day is one of the most offensive features of literature. The excessive laudation which they bestow upon other authors for the sake of being paid back in kind, perhaps with compound interest, sickens the stomach of common honesty. It reminds one of the days of Queen Anne, when mutual puffery was as common among the wits as biting satire of those whom they envied or rivalled. Dr. Johnson told Mrs. Piozzi, who was an adept in the arts of adulation, that if Samuel Richardson could have lived till she could have added her incense to that which already smoked on his altar, she would have added two or three years to that novelist's life ; " for," said the great Mogul of literature, " that fellow died for want of change among his flatterers. He perished for want of more [of them], *like a man obliged to breathe the same air till it is exhausted.*" (Is not that a piquant illustration?) What a contrast between this and Johnson's language concerning Milton, of whom he says that " from his contemporaries he neither courted nor received support ; there is in his writings nothing by which the pride of other authors might be gratified, or favor gained, — *no exchange of praise*, nor solicitation of support." Worthy was such a man to receive the magnificent eulogium which follows : " His great

works were performed under discountenance and blindness ; but difficulties vanished at his touch. He was born for whatever is arduous ; and his work is not the greatest of heroic poems *only because it is not the first.*"

**A Plea for Pedants.** WHY is it that pedants are generally so ridiculed? Is it not lucky for a man that he *can* contract an intense, even an extravagant, fondness of some pursuit, — some specific study, art, or science, — which he will consequently understand better than other men, and in solving whose problems he may become an expert? What is a man good for without professional enthusiasm, — who does not give his whole soul to his calling, concentrating upon it all his energies, and loving it with an ardor that almost ignores the existence of any other? "No man," says Emerson, "can do anything well, who does not think that what he does is the centre of the visible universe." It is easy to declaim against "one-ideaism," "intellectual narrowness," and "a' that;" but, in spite of the cheap eloquence and fashionable cant of superficially-omniscient men who plume themselves upon their fancied oceanic breadth and depth, we love to see a man magnify his calling, even if he does overrate its relative importance. It is only thus that he can achieve excellence or eminence.

Who are the men that make their mark on the world, and to what do they owe their celebrity and influence? Are they the men who have the most versatility and the most varied culture? No; they are those whose minds want balance, who have some giant faculty developed at the expense of the rest. The very deadness of perception thus induced promotes self-confidence and positiveness. Occasionally, at long intervals in the history of humanity,



a person appears who wings his flight to the peaks of greatness by an equal flapping of his wings; but all the rest gain their motion like a mill-wheel, — by a continued fall of water on one side. The want of balance, it has been truly said, is the cause of most motion; and therefore the minds that stir the stagnant pool of common thought are out of equilibrium, and propelled by this very cause, like a pith figure loaded with a leaden foot, to spring with impatient yet effective force in some providentially-prescribed direction. Once in four or five centuries the world beholds a Leonardo da Vinci or a Leibnitz; but few of their fellow-mortals can fully master more than one art or science, — all beyond is a miserable affectation and a downright waste of time. What Michael Angelo said of painting is true of every other art or craft: “It is jealous, and requires the whole man.”

The day of universal scholars is past. The measure of a man's learning to-day is the amount of his voluntary ignorance; the measure of his practical force is the amount he is content to leave unattempted. We cannot, therefore, admire the man who, instead of being devoted to one great art, — “married to that immortal bride,” — woos all the muses in turn; not content to be a painter, sculptor, or writer, unless he is also “chemist, statesman, fiddler, and buffoon.” There is no end of acquisition, if one begins to dabble in all the *ologies* and *isms* which may be intrinsically valuable, or which, if possessed, may add a feather to his reputation. Give us a thousand times, rather, the glorious pedantry of Fielding's Parson Adams, who thought a schoolmaster the greatest character in the world, and himself the greatest schoolmaster in it! We smile when we are told of the French grammarian Daguesseau,

who, when told that a revolution had broken out in Paris, replied, "Never mind! I have in my portfolio thirty-six conjugations, all completed;" and, again, when we hear of Dr. George, who shrewdly suspected that Frederick the Great, with all his victories, could not conjugate a Greek verb in *mi*. But this very exclusiveness — this absorption in one pursuit — is the secret of all power. Was Vestris, the French dancing-master, guilty of coxcombry or falsehood in declaring that Voltaire and himself were the two greatest men in all Europe? No, assuredly; he but manifested a proper feeling of enthusiasm for his art, and it would have been downright hypocrisy for him to have pretended to think otherwise.

Sydney Smith, in satirizing the classical education at the English universities, says that "the Parr or the Bentley of his day would be scandalized to be put on a level with the discoverer of a neutral salt." And why not, prithee? Can we expect a great scholar, who has devoted a life to his calling, to deem any other of equal rank and importance? Shall a painter be required to feel the same admiration for the works of Mozart and Handel as for those of Raphael and Titian? Why should *not* the Greek or Latin scholar, who has "scorned delights and lived laborious days" to possess himself of those stubborn tongues, "glory in the detection of an anapest in the wrong place, or in the restoration of a dative case which Cranzius has passed over, and the never-dying Ernesti failed to observe"? What if a grammarian *does* "tower and plume himself," as Sir Thomas Browne says that he has known one to do, "over a line of Horace, and show more pride in the construction of one ode than the author in the composure of the whole book"? We see nothing ridiculous in this; it is but the natural result of a passionate and absorbing love for one's pursuit.



We are told of Baron Masères, with whom the study of abstract arithmetic was a passion, that his leading idea seemed to have been to calculate more decimal places than any one could possibly want, and to print the works of all who had done the same thing. What mathematician ever signally distinguished himself whose devotion to his science was not thus exclusive? Who would employ in a great suit a lawyer who does not bristle all over with *nolle prosequis* and *certioraris* and *surrebutters*, and shed tears of admiration over his Coke upon Littleton and his Fearne on "Contingent Remainders"? It is only the blockhead or hypocrite who never goes crazy with enthusiasm. "A London apprentice who did not admire the Lord Mayor's coach," says Hazlitt, "would stand a good chance of coming to be hanged." In short, to excel greatly in any profession there should be an exclusiveness, a bigotry, a blindness of attachment to it, which will make every other seem insignificant in comparison.

The world holds the same view. It will not believe in the depth of a many-sided man. To what but this were due the doubt and detraction which dogged Bulwer all his days? Had he been a novelist only, instead of being the "Admirable Crichton" of letters, — novelist, essayist, satirist, dramatist, poet, historian, orator, — he would have held a far higher and more undisputed place in the literary Walhalla. It was said by Jules Janin of Édouard Fournier: "*Cet homme là sait tout; il ne sait que cela; mais il le sait bien.*" Yet Fournier, in spite of his encyclopædic culture, is an obscure man of letters.

Even when it is shown in a reprehensible calling, one cannot but admire an absorbing enthusiasm. Froissart, in his "Chronicles," tells of a reverend monk who had been

a robber in his early life, and who, growing old, used pathetically to lament that he had ever changed his profession. He said "it was a goodly sight to sally out from his castle, and to see a troop of jolly friars come riding that way, with their mules well laden with viands and rich stores; to advance toward them; to attack and overthrow them, returning to the castle with a noble booty." Even the veriest villain, if he be a consummate villain, must be more content and better pleased with himself than his half-faced counterfeit; and this simply through his force and determination of character. We should have, too, more hope of reclaiming him and making him a blessing to the world than of reforming the cold, heartless block of a scoundrel in whom to kindle enthusiasm for anything, good or bad, would be like "creating a soul under the ribs of death."

**English vs. American Manners.** READER, have you ever visited Trenton Falls, and had a chat with Mr. Moore, the proprietor of the pleasant, home-like hotel there? He used to have a fund of amusing anecdotes, one of which we well remember. He was discussing one day with a guest from England the subject of American as compared with English manners. "There," said the guest triumphantly to his host, as he pointed to a pair of booted legs resting on the window-sill of an upper room, which greeted their eyes as they walked in the garden toward the house, — "there is a sample of American manners!"

"I don't know," replied Mr. Moore, "who is the occupant of that room; but I will wager a bottle of champagne with you that he is not one of my country-men."

The challenge was instantly accepted, and on inquiring of the clerk of the hotel, it was found that the owner of the protruding boots was a young English nobleman.

“Well,” said the discomfited better, with ready wit, “it is surprising how readily our people, when they come over here, acquire your habits!”

**How to Treat Satirists.** WHAT is the best way to treat a satirist, — one who has made you the butt of his ridicule, and the laughing-stock of the public? There are some persons of nervous temperament who feel as uneasy in the presence of such a jester as if they were shut up in a room with a fulminating shell, or an insecurely caged cobra capello. Henry I. of England, when ridiculed in a clever lampoon, could think of no more telling reply than to have the author's eyes put out. Ages before Henry, the noble Roman family of the Metelli fancied that the most pertinent answer to the well-known stinging line of Nævius was to cast him into prison. On the other hand, Nero, with all his cruelty, never punished his own libellers; and Julius Cæsar, when he was lampooned by Catullus, invited him to supper, and treated him with such magnanimous civility that he converted the poet-enemy into a life-long friend. One of the old kings of France was wont, when urged to avenge a satirical assault, to observe that “the ass which beareth the burden must be allowed to bray.” Cardinal Mazarin replied to an attack by the learned Guillet by sending for and expostulating with him, — assuring him of his esteem, and shortly afterward conferring upon him a good abbey. This treatment had so happy an effect upon the libeller that he dedicated the second edition of his book to the Cardinal, after having expunged the offensive passages.

**An Error** CAN a great poet be a moral iceberg? We regarding think not. One might as well talk of a cold-John Milton, blooded race-horse, a sedentary will-o'-the-wisp, or a lazy lightning.

Apropos to this subject, we have just read a new critical biography of John Milton, by Richard Garnett, which invests a threadbare theme with really fresh interest. The author combats the popular idea of the poet, which regards him as a great, good, reverend, austere, not very amiable, and not very sensitive man. The author and his books are thus set at variance, and the attempt to conceive the character as a whole results in confusion and inconsistency. Milton, with all his strength of will and regularity of life, is shown by Mr. Garnett to be as perfect a representative as any of his compeers of the sensitiveness and impulsive passion of the poetical temperament. In proof of this, his new biographer appeals to certain characteristics of the poet which we have never seen set in so vivid a light before, — namely, his remarkable dependence upon external prompting for his compositions; the rapidity of his work under excitement, and his long periods of unproductiveness; the heat and fury of his polemics, and the simplicity with which, fortunately for us, he describes small particulars of his own life side by side with the weightiest utterances on Church and State. Further proofs of his impressible and fervid temperament are the precipitancy of his first marriage and its rupture; his sudden pliability upon appeal to his generosity; his romantic self-sacrifice, when his country demanded his eyes from him; above all, his splendid ideals of regenerated human life, such as poets alone either conceive or realize. To overlook all this, is to affirm that Milton wrote great poetry without being truly a poet.



We thank Mr. Garnett for thus humanizing the great Puritan poet. Henceforth, he will cease to be merely a cold, statuesque idol of the intellect, and will have a shrine in our heart.

**"No Chance to Make Money Now."** It is a common complaint in these days that there are no good opportunities now, such as there once were, to make money. Competition, men tell you, is so keen that the profits of business are small, while the risks of loss are many and large. To do a profitable business requires now not only more brains, but a larger capital and intenser activity than ever before. Trade tends to concentration in fewer and fewer hands; the great houses are continually absorbing the small ones, or, by underselling them, driving them into bankruptcy. For every clerkship there are hundreds of applicants, which reduces wages so low that a young man who wishes to go into business by and by for himself can barely live, without laying up a dollar. Now, while there is a certain amount of truth in this, we believe it to be enormously exaggerated. We think we could show, had we space, that for a man who is abreast with the age, and has mastered the latest and best modes of doing business, the present is in many respects the best time in the world's history to win an independence or a fortune. Instead, however, of showing the truth of this opinion, we will tell an anecdote.

About fifty years ago, we were chatting in a hotel in Maine with a shrewd old retired merchant, over eighty years of age, who, beginning life a poor boy in a village in Kennebec County, Maine, had accumulated from eight hundred thousand to a million of dollars, — a sum equivalent to more than twice as much to-day. "People," said

the old man, "are always complaining that there are no chances now to make money. Thirty years ago, they tell you, there were plenty of such chances; and, had you lived at that time, you would have heard the same croakings. I remember well that people *then* said the days for acquiring fortunes had gone by, — that the time for making money was just after the Revolution; and I have no doubt that during this last period there were plenty of unsuccessful men who asserted that there was no profit in business, — that the lucky men were those who lived a generation earlier. And so you might go back a hundred years, or more, and always you would hear from many persons the same despairing cry. Now, the fact is, Mr. Mathews," continued he, after pausing a moment to take a pinch of snuff, "that all times are good for making money, *if you only know how*; and if you don't know how, all times are bad."

"But, Mr. G.," said we, "suppose that a young man is a clerk in a store in Boston, with a salary of only two hundred dollars a year, and he has to pay five dollars a week for his clothes and board: how is he to lay up any money? How is he to get a start in life, or find capital to go into any business for himself?"

"I don't undertake," replied the old man, in his shrill, low voice, "to say *how* it can be done; I only say that if he has the *will* to do it, it *will* be done. But, instead of arguing the matter, I will tell you a story. About fifty years ago there was a poor boy in Maine, whose father, once independent, had lost most of his property by indorsing notes for friends, and who lived in a log-house. The boy used to pick strawberries and other fruits, and carry them two miles to a country village, where he sold them at three cents a quart. One day a firm of traders, thinking



he had a turn for business, asked him how he would like to be one of their clerks. His eyes sparkled at the proposal; and on his saying that he would like the place, he was taken into the store. His salary for the first seven years was forty dollars a year and board. For the next two years he received one hundred dollars a year and his board. At the end of the nine years' clerkship, his employers took him into copartnership. How much money do you suppose he had at that time laid up?"

"Why," we replied, "if he had resembled some clerks that are employed to-day, he probably, if he could have got credit for such a sum, would have been about fifteen hundred dollars in debt."

"Well," said the old merchant in a tone of triumph, "that is precisely the sum which he had laid up in clean cash. And now, if you don't believe the story, I will tell you who the boy was. *He was your own father*, and I was one of the firm that employed him as clerk and finally took him into copartnership."

Surprised at this revelation, and conscious that we had been floored by an *argumentum ad hominem*, we were silent for a few minutes, and then added: "But the whole of your clerk's salary, Mr. G., for the nine years, put at compound interest, would n't have amounted to the fifteen hundred dollars which you say he had hoarded."

"Oh," was the reply, "he kept his money turning over, of course. He fished at night in the Kennebec, — caught and sold salmon, and dickered with the farmers, etc. But he never neglected his employers' business. He dressed well, and always had a handsome extra suit of clothes to go a-courting in. He was my partner for thirty years, and the only one I did not lose money by."

**The Trials of Librarians.** WHAT an amusing book might be written, if he would relate his experiences, by that much-abused and sorely-tried person, the librarian of a great public library! What startling revelations of popular ignorance, almost staggering one's credulity, a veteran like Mr. Cutter of the Boston Athenæum, or Mr. Poole of the Newberry Library in Chicago, might make! Think of a visitor making a furious complaint, book in hand, as did one at the National Library in Paris, against the carelessness which has found a volume altogether different from the one he asked for, — namely, “*Le Jardin des Racines Grecques*,” which is, in fact, the very volume he angrily brandishes! “If,” says the official, courteously, “this volume does not contain all the information you want, we have others which are completer and go deeper into the matter. For instance, there is the ‘*Thesaurus Linguae Græcæ*.’”

“That, sir,” replies the visitor, “is nothing to the purpose. I am a gardener, and what I want to know is, how the Greeks laid out their gardens.”

Think of a visitor asking, as did one at the British Museum, to be allowed to see “the original samshrift,” which he afterward explains “is the foundation of every language under the sun!” Suspecting that a Sanskrit manuscript may be the thing desired, the librarian shows him a palm-leaf MS., which completely satisfies his curiosity. He evidently came expecting to find that “the original Sanskrit” was a single document, which he might touch and handle.

The seemingly intuitive sagacity, the result of long experience, with which the employés in a great library divine the wants of visitors, who give only the vaguest and sometimes wholly misleading hints of the books they wish for,

is extraordinary. I was told by one of the officials in the delivery room of the Boston Athenæum that a lady called there one day, and said, "I want a work on nervous prostration." It seems incredible that, even with all her practice in interpreting the imperfectly expressed wishes of visitors, the assistant librarian should have guessed, and guessed rightly, that the lady wanted a novel entitled "A Fashionable Sufferer." Another and more enigmatical visitor, an old lady, said, "I want a book that begins with *C*," — a request which, one would think, must have baffled the combined efforts of the officials to discover its reference; but the reference was rightly divined. Still another lady asked for "a book about something in your pocket," by which it was rightly guessed that she meant a work entitled "A Strange Manuscript found in a Copper Cylinder," — the only clew being the little preposition *in*. A gentleman asked one day for "a book by a person who lives in Waltham." Knowing that "A Humble Romance," by Miss Wilkins, of Waltham, was very popular, Miss R. asked if he meant *that* book, to which the reply was "Yes."

When I was librarian of the Young Men's Library Association in Chicago, some thirty years ago, a rich and fashionable lady sailed into the room one day with an air of conscious importance, and asked, "Have you any of David Copperfield's works?" Another fashionable lady asked, "Have you a page?" When I replied, "You mean a catalogue, madam, I presume?" she rejoined, "Well, page or catalogue either, — I don't care which!"

*Per contra*, — the visitors at libraries do not monopolize all the blunders. A lady from St. Paul, who asked at the Boston Public Library for "Evelyn's Diary," was told that

she would find it "below, on the first floor, where all the novels are kept!"

**Bolingbroke as a Writer.** IN speaking of the Chicago Young Men's Library Association, I am reminded of an amusing incident, quite different from the foregoing, which may be worth narrating. One day a young man from the High School called at the library when I was its librarian, and asked, "Have you any works on history? I've got to write an essay on that subject, and I want some help." I handed to him Bolingbroke's "Letters on the Study of History," and said sportively, "It would be a good joke to copy a few pages from this book and see what the professor's criticism would be!" Not dreaming of being taken seriously, I was not a little surprised, when, some weeks later, the young man returned the volume, saying, —

"I have followed your suggestion. I copied several pages *verbatim*, and the professor corrected them with his usual care."

"What general criticism did he make on the essay?"

"Oh, he said that the thoughts were very good indeed, but that the style betrayed marks of youthful immaturity."

Considering that the most salient characteristics of Bolingbroke as a writer are notoriously dearth of thought and brilliancy of style, — that, while his ideas are generally trite, he nevertheless, "at every turn," as Mr. W. Minto says, "electrifies the reader with some felicitous stroke of criticism or happy adjustment of words to his meaning," — the professor's criticism must be deemed altogether original and unique.

**Matter-of-Fact Men.** THE celebrated philosopher and apostle of utility, Jeremy Bentham, despised poetry, and



once declared that the game of "pushpin" is of equal value with the poetical art. The only value he could see in poetry was as a means of amusement, — it being, with pushpin and other amusements, "an excellent substitute for drunkenness, slander, and the love of gaming." Malebranche thought that a good poet was "of no more service to the Church or the State than a good player at nine-pins." Locke and the elder Mill held an almost equally contemptuous opinion of this art, which Plato preferred to every other, which Wordsworth has called "the breath and finer spirit of all knowledge," and which Bacon superbly says, "was ever thought to have some participation of divineness, because it doth raise and erect the mind by submitting the shows of things to the desires of the mind." At a public meeting in England, the painter, Sir Joshua Reynolds, heard Dr. Tucker, the Dean of Gloucester, assert that a pin-maker is a more valuable and useful member of society than Raphael!

What a dull, prosaic world would this be were it peopled by such utilitarians, in the narrowest sense of the word, — such cold-blooded, matter-of-fact men as these! As Falstaff asked of Honor, they ask of Poetry, if it can set a broken leg, or cure the grief of a wound; and when answered in the negative, they exclaim that it is "a word, air, a trim reckoning," and they'll have none of it. As there are literal, unimaginative minds to which all poetry is a sealed mystery, so there are others to which Nature makes no appeal except by the productive energies of her soil, the profitable uses of the vegetation of her forests, or the mechanical powers to which her streams are converted in their descent from the mountains to the valleys or the sea. Charles Sprague did not exaggerate when, in his charming poem, "Curiosity," he spoke of men —

“ Who, placed where Catskill’s forehead greets the sky,  
Grieve that such quarries all unhewn should lie ;  
Or, gazing where Niagara’s torrents thrill,  
Exclaim, ‘ A monster stream to turn a mill ! ’ ”

Schiller sang truly, when he said of the Muse, —

“ To some she is a goddess great,  
To some the milch-cow of the field, —  
Their only care to calculate  
How much butter she will yield.”

Judas, when he demanded why the precious ointment poured on the head of our Saviour was thus wasted, instead of being sold and the proceeds given to the poor, showed himself — or would have done so if he had been sincere — a genuine utilitarian. To such persons, the eloquent appeal of Beattie has no meaning, —

“ Oh, how canst thou renounce the boundless store  
Of charms which Nature to her votary yields ?  
The warbling woodland, the resounding heaven,  
The pomp of groves, and the garniture of fields ;  
All that the genial ray of morning gilds,  
And all that echoes in the song of even,  
And that the mountain’s sheltering bosom shields,  
And all the dread magnificence of Heaven, —  
Oh, how canst thou renounce, and hope to be forgiven ? ”

By the hard matter-of-fact man, “ all the dread magnificence of heaven ” — “ this firmament fretted with golden fires ” — is valued only for the light it gives. Such a man cannot understand why the tolling of an old cracked bell through the country should have aroused such enthusiasm as did that of Independence Hall recently, on its way to Chicago. Show him the coat in which Nelson died at Trafalgar, or which Grant wore at Lee’s surrender, and he would wonder whether the cloth was of West of England



or Bradford manufacture. If he had heard Hackett telling, with all the fervor of Falstaff himself, how "the misbegotten knaves in Kendal Green let drive at him," he would have wondered whether the green was fast-colored dye. Transport him to the plains of Marathon, and he would see in them only dirt and turf and stones. A jar of water from Jordan or from Helicon is to him not materially different from the water in his own well. He cannot understand how, touched by the imagination, such earth is to other men magic earth, and such water enchanted water. A rose from the rose-bush which we once saw at Hildesheim, Germany, planted behind the cathedral (as there is documentary evidence to show) nearly nine hundred years ago, is but a rose, of myriads on the earth.

"A primrose by the river's brim  
A yellow primrose is to him,  
And nothing more."

A jest which sets other men in a roar is to such a man incomprehensible; or if it be not absolutely incomprehensible, it hangs fire in the icy receptacle of his brain till it has been explained and all its aroma has evaporated. It was such a man—a country rector in Yorkshire by the name of Buckle—who sat silent at a meeting of the clergy, and when Sydney Smith gave his health, saying that he was "a Buckle without a tongue," sat grim over the jest, trying for fifteen minutes to extract its meaning, then nudging the wit, exclaimed, "I see *now* what you mean, Mr. Smith: you meant a joke," and nearly choked with laughter! It was another such a man who, when his pastor, Dr. Samuel Hopkins, finding him sick and unable to attend church, proposed to bring one of his sermons and

read it to him, replied, "Do so, for I have had no sleep since the attack began."

England, the home of utilitarianism, abounds in such men, who, as Burke said a century or more ago, value only what they can measure with a two-foot rule, or count on their ten fingers. Henry Russell, the celebrated vocalist, gives many striking illustrations of this literal phase of the British intellect. At one time he gave, at Hanley, an entertainment for the benefit of the Staffordshire potters, who were in great distress. After he had sung, "There's a good time coming, boys, wait a little longer," etc., a man in the crowd rose, greatly excited, and shouted, "Muster Russell, can ye fix the toime?" At another time, as Mr. Russell was singing, "Woodman, spare that tree," an old gentleman cried out, "Mr. Russell, was the tree spared?" "It was, sir." "Thank God for that!" he responded, with a sigh of relief.

**The Secret of Literary Success.** IN Blackwood's Magazine for February, 1892, there is a paper on the late Mr. Kinglake which contains some observations upon the preparation of his first book, "Eothen," that merit the thoughtful consideration of all young writers. They reveal the secret of the immediate, brilliant, and exceptional success of that book, and of the strong hold which, in spite of many powerful rivals, it retains on public attention. It appears that the first casting into shape of Mr. Kinglake's notes of Eastern travel was very far from that which was finally given to the world. It was kept in his desk almost as long as Wordsworth kept "The White Doe of Rylstone," and kept, like that, to be taken out for revision, condensation, and correction almost every day.

For many years the most fastidious and exacting taste was constantly at work upon it, blotting, expanding, and polishing with ceaseless care. After an interval which in most minds would have dimmed into vagueness the reminiscences of the trip to the East, his record of it came forth so rich in color, so incisive in form, so finished in literary grace, that it almost instantly made its author famous. "Probably no book of travel," says Blackwood, "which does not depend for its interest on exciting adventure or absolute novelty of subject, ever gained more celebrity for its writer. . . . The book sparkles with fine points, like a brooch set with brilliants."

The patient, unwearying toil which Mr. Kinglake bestowed upon his epoch-making book (for such, as a book of travels, it was), reminds us of the prodigious painstaking of another literary worker a century and a half ago. Alexander Pope did some of his work rapidly, to gain a foothold in literature, — an independence. When translating Homer, he turned out fifty or sixty lines a day with not less regularity, and sometimes with not much more inspiration, than an artisan does his work in a factory, or than Babbage's calculating machine turned out its solutions of mathematical problems. Many pages of his translation read like "tours de force," or as if the poet had timed himself, as one times a race-horse, with a stop-watch. But when the little diminutive bard wrote, as in his Satires, from a real afflatus, and to please himself, — above all, when he wrote to "feed fat an ancient grudge," — what a transformation his verse underwent! Then he composed with care, and corrected with never-tiring patience; he polished and repolished; he grudged no pains to give a keener edge to some cutting epigram, or to improve the

flow of his rhythm. It was not till after innumerable condensations, blots, and erasures, and till it had been kept in his portfolio for many years, that he gave a satire to the printer. That masterpiece of wit and sarcasm, sparkling with keen epigram, and containing the immortal lines on Atticus, — the “Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot,” — is, as a critic has justly said, the quintessence of thoughts which have been refined in the crucible; clear, bright crystals, which have been slowly precipitated from the turbid torrent of confused meditations, and fused together with the care of a skilled jeweller setting his most precious gems to the best advantage.

**A Goodly Heritage.** Is there a country on the globe the young men of which have greater reason to be proud of their inheritance from the past than have those of America? What people has ever before advanced with such giant strides in the path of prosperity? Marvellous indeed has been the growth of England, which from one little central point — a rock, as it were, in the midst of the ocean — has spread herself over the entire world; but the same inherent energy which has enabled her with her morning drum-beat to “follow the sun, and keep company with the hours,” till she has encircled “the earth with one continuous and unbroken strain of the martial airs of England,” — the same energy which drove the iron-armed Roman to conquest, bringing the whole known earth under his dominion, — is urging on our people, not to military, but to peaceful, conquests, the effects of which are seen in far-stretching networks of railway, electric telegraphs and telephones, fields rich with grain and fruits, gardens filling the air with perfume, schoolhouses, colleges, churches,



and happy homes. The creation of a State or a kingdom in the Old World is a great affair, which generally takes place amid convulsions and war; but here a new State, with organization all complete, and working with the regularity of clock-work, is turned out as readily as a railway shop turns out a new locomotive.

A country that has no castes, no primogeniture laws; that requires no one to give the flower of his youth to service in its army; that exacts no tithes for a state church, and requires no property qualification of the voter; where every man has the opportunity to make the most of himself, and is eligible to every political office; where \$156,000,000 is spent annually for schools, which are open without charge to the poorest youth; of whose population eighty-seven per cent over ten years old can read and write, — is surely a good country to live in. But when we consider that, besides all these blessings, our country is rich in gold, silver, iron, copper, coal, and other minerals, and abounds in the finest fruits; that it is a country whose wealth, now increasing seven millions a day, has quintupled in seventy years; that it possesses as much mechanical energy as Great Britain, France, and Germany united; above all, that it is a country which has no grudges against other nations to feed, no “earth-hunger” to satisfy; whose people, instead of living, as so many other peoples do, on the “ragged edge” of revolution, enjoy a stable and orderly government, which is “of the people, by the people, and for the people,” — what youth could covet a more goodly heritage? Add to all these distinctions an ever-varying scenery, vying with that of Switzerland in grandeur, and that of Italy in beauty; and climates like those of Florida and southern California, enabling the

American with the aid of the iron horse to bathe in delicious and vivifying sunshine all the year round, — and say whether ours is not a country worth living in and living for; nay, even dying for, if its liberties are imperilled?

**May One Laugh at His Own Jokes?**      WHY not? Would you give none of the game to the dog that catches it? Would you muzzle the ox that treads out the corn? Does not everybody know how much the zest of a witticism or a good story is enhanced by the arch look that foretells it, by the facetious manner that accompanies its utterance, and by the contagious merriment of the humorist himself?

Dr. Johnson praised Beauclerk for the sobriety with which he brought out his sly, incisive retorts. “No man,” he said, “was so free, when he was going to say a good thing, from a look which expressed that it was a good thing; or, when he had said it, from a look which expressed that it had come.” No doubt, there are occasions when the teller of a good story or the perpetrator of a good joke should maintain a solemn or subdued manner; but generally the most mirth-provoking wits are those who enter most deeply into the spirit of their jests, and whose lungs crow like chanticleer over their merry conceits. It is not merely the dry jest, but the zest also with which it is uttered, — the relish which the narrator himself has of it, — that we sympathize with. Persons who hold to the old adage on this matter must be shocked when they learn that Burns, after he had completed that masterpiece of humor, the weird and wondrous tale of “Tam O’Shanter,” which he dashed off in one day, was heard breaking forth into shouts of laughter as he walked home at night repeating it to himself. Thomas Fuller’s quips are perhaps



generally unconscious ; but sometimes when he drops a jest, it is accompanied with a merry twinkle of the eye, a quiet, subdued chuckle, a half-audible crow, which proclaims his consciousness that the jest is good. Sydney Smith did not hesitate to laugh at his own jokes, which he did with more glee than any of his hearers ; and when dining with a company of brilliant talkers, who were all so impatient to lead the conversation that no one of them would have leisure to eat, he would silently discuss the soup, the fish, and the roast, and then, when he had completely dined, would deliver himself of some rib-tickling conceit, some irresistibly ludicrous jest, at which he would laugh till, infecting others with his mirth, he had set the whole table in a roar. Having thus obtained the lead of the conversation, he would triumphantly keep it for the rest of the evening.

**What is Truth to Nature ?** AN English critic praises the descriptive powers of the poet Crabbe at the expense of Thomson, by saying that the descriptions of the English bard “ are not, like the Scotch poet’s, of imaginary but of real nature.” What strange ideas has this writer of poetic imagination ! He seems to think that it is opposed to truth ; whereas it is the very vividness of his imagination, its superior force and delicacy, which enables the painter of external nature to catch its subtle hues and reproduce them with greater truth than other men. The test of truth in a picture, even in a portrait, is not its prosaic literalness, its minute and matter-of-fact copying of details, but the success with which it puts the soul of a landscape or a person on canvas. “ I never see sunsets like yours,” said a realistic old lady to Turner. “ Don’t you wish you

could, madam?" was the painter's quiet reply. Crabbe did not look on Nature with the eye of a poet. He was, by his elaborateness and minuteness, at once the Teniers and the Wilkie of British bards. Unique and original in his genius, he yet had little sympathy with the picturesque, and none whatever with the romantic; so that, as one of his admirers has said, Sir Philip Sidney must have been an enigma to him, and Don Quixote a stark lunatic.

"Realism," says that subtle and sensible critic, Amiel, "wishes to entrap sensation; the object of true art is only to charm the imagination, not to cheat the eye. . . . A work of art ought to set the poetical faculty in us at work; it ought to stir us to imagine, to complete our perception of a thing. Mere copyists' painting, realistic production, pure imitation, leave us cold, because their author is a machine, a mirror, an iodized plate, and not a soul."

Will any one assert that the landscapes of Claude Lorraine — composed as they are of picturesque materials gathered from a hundred different points, united with consummate taste and skill, and poetized or idealized by his exquisite imagination — are not as true to Nature as the most literal production, the exactest imitation, that ever came from the pencil of a Teniers, an Ostade, or any other Dutch artist? Claude was not less a student because his imagination was so powerful. He sat whole days watching a scene, and studying the effects of light at different hours. The result was, that by the enchanting play of his sunlight, the freshness of his dewy foregrounds, and the charm of his atmospheric distances, he obtained a tone of feeling which influences the mind like an eternal Sabbath rest.

**Living by Proxy.** RALPH WALDO EMERSON has somewhere spoken of the heavy tax we pay for our modern civilization, which renders us more and more helpless for every advantage it brings us. The time seems to be rapidly coming, when men and women in our great cities will cease to do for themselves anything that demands toil, thought, or care, and will have everything but their breathing, eating, and sleeping done for them.

In New York there are men who by yearly contract repair all the leaks, rents, and fractures that occur in houses ; there are others who daily wind up the clocks and keep them in order ; and there are girls of exquisite taste who relieve housekeepers of the trouble of entertaining company. A girl of this profession, we are told, decorates the table, makes with her own hands one or two delicious dishes to add distinction to the feast, and directs the preparation of the others by the servants ; she can tell at a glance how to make the most of the material at her disposal, and almost makes herself a necessity to the inexperienced or careworn housekeeper. Again, there are half-a-dozen gentlemen, we are told, in New York, who earn a handsome living by holding conversation classes, and giving private lessons in that important and yet most difficult of arts. The majority of pupils are boys and girls just graduating from the schoolroom ; but elderly persons come, and insist upon a private coaching, — persons into whom it is almost impossible to instil courage or grace in their manner of talking. All these pupils are not only taught the art of selecting suitable topics, and of making happy comments on them, but are warned against long-winded anecdotes, dreary stories, tiresome personal and family details, *risqué* allusions, sarcasms, and scandal.

They also receive — most unique and wonderful of all — *lessons in laughing*, including the proper modulation of the voice, and a stern suppression of the giggle.

In Boston this “modern improvement” has advanced still farther. There are women who gain a livelihood by meeting companies of other women in private houses, and talking to them on the leading topics of the day, expounding special subjects, and “posting up” their hearers regarding the lives and works of German or Russian writers, or French or Italian painters. The ladies thus instructed are enabled, it is said, to gain a knowledge of current events, literature, and art, with the slightest mental effort, and to be qualified, when in society, to take part, either in the drawing-room or at the dinner-table, in any conversation that may spring up on art, the drama, and literature, social science or political events, without any of the wearisome research and drudgery, the brow-wrinkling thought, and the wear and tear of eye, nerve, and brain, to which cultivated men are everywhere subjected.

No doubt, as there are always sceptics who have no faith in progress, there are cynical, old-fashioned persons who on reading the foregoing will sneer at such “improvements.” They will suggest that the entertainment which costs the entertainer no trouble will lack individuality, one of its principal charms, and will not elicit much thankfulness. They will mock at the idea of laughing by rule, and will perhaps quote the Concord sage, who says that “laughing is to be avoided,” and who cites the *mot* of Chesterfield, that, after he had come to the years of understanding, he never laughed. They will flout what they will call “the shallow Americanism” that knowledge can be gained by proxy, mastery without apprenticeship, familiarity with a



subject without long-continued brooding over it, and ability to converse intelligently on it by skimming over its surface. They will declare that *iteration* is the secret of tenacious recollection, and that what is acquired hastily as hastily disappears. They will affirm with Pestalozzi, that "*thinking only* leads man to knowledge. He may see and hear, and read and learn, whatever he pleases, and as much as he pleases; he will never know anything of it except *that which he has thought over*, that which by thinking he *has made the property of his mind*." But who in these days of fast travel and fast living — of lightning express-trains, electric cars, and ocean greyhounds — of tunnels and short-cuts — cares for the opinions of a *passé* educator, who lived in the slow-coach times of a century ago?

**Advancing Backward.** WHEN Parry, the Arctic navigator, sought to reach the Pole with his pack of dogs, sledges and dogs apparently went forward. When, however, the sun broke through the mist, and the latitudes could be ascertained, it was found, to the astonishment of the party, that, without being aware of it, they had actually gone several degrees backward. The ground on which they had moved forward was a detached field of ice, carried south by the current. Does not this incident remind one of some of the "advanced thinkers" of our day? While priding themselves upon their progress, how often would they find, if they could learn their actual situation, that they have been actually advancing backward: in other words, instead of discovering new objections to Christianity or to its cardinal doctrines, they have unconsciously gone back a century or centuries, and are actually repeating, without the slightest suspicion of the fact, the old exploded



arguments of Toland, Celsus, and other freethinkers who lived a century or centuries ago!

**Sensible** ARCHDEACON HARE expresses the opinion in  
**Nonsense.** that unique book "Guesses at Truth," that, as the next best thing to a very good joke is a very bad one, so the next best thing to a very good argument is one that is very bad. In both cases the extremes meet. The exquisitely good and the deplorably bad are each commendable; it is only mediocrity which is "tolerable," and, therefore, "not to be endured."

For example, an Oxford scholar, meeting a porter who was carrying a hare through the streets, accosted him with this question: "Prithee, is that thy own hare, or a wig?" It is impossible to excuse this, and it is impossible to help being tickled by it. Its very lameness — the limping in one leg — which would provoke the scorn of a carping, laughter-proof critic, constitutes its beauty. So also in argument, the selfsame result which a fine piece of logic accomplishes regularly by square, rule, and compass, is now and then reached by its misshapen brethren *per saltum*, as a piece of luck. Could any syllogism in mood and figure be more convincing than the peasant's logic: "How good it was of God to put Sunday at one end of the week, for if He had put it in the middle He would have made a broken week of it!" Hardly less admirable was the reasoning of the Capuchin monk, who called upon his congregation to be especially thankful that Providence had mercifully placed death at the end of life, and not in the middle, "so that we might all have time to prepare for it."

Again, who does not yield to the irresistible, though comical, reasoning of the tenant of a leaky house, who was

asked, during a heavy rainstorm, why he did not have it reshingled. "Because it is raining," he replied. "But why not repair the roof during the pleasant weather?" "Because there is no need of it then." Some of the finest lines in literature are those that thus limp in their logic, — indeed, are absolute paradoxes; as when Story sings, —

"Of every noble work the silent part is best;  
Of all expression, that which cannot be expressed;"

or when Milton, not afraid of a double paradox, portrays certain pompous but shallow preachers of his time as "wading out to their auditors, *up to their eyebrows in deep shallows that wet not the instep*." Shakespeare's dogmatic friend, Ben Jonson, asserted that when the former made Cæsar say, —

"Cæsar never did wrong without just cause,"

the great dramatist made "the foremost man of all the world" utter nonsense; and such it might be, falling from another man's lips. But could anything else so fully express the mighty self-centred ambition, the enormous self-reliance of the man, as this assumption that Cæsar's needs had power to change the moral aspect of things; so that an act which done by another would be wrong, would, if performed by *him*, thereby get an impress of right?

"Phoebus,      A PERSON in Webster, Mass., advertises in  
What a      the Boston "Herald" for sale or rent, forty-  
Name!"      three acres of "valuable real estate" in the  
first-named town, "bounded on the east by Chargoggagogg-  
manchanggagoggagungamaugg Lake," which, we are told,  
"has become a favorite summer resort" of New Yorkers  
and others.

What a charming name that lake has! It is formed from nine different letters only, yet numbers thirty-eight, including repetitions. Who would not covet a rural home by a sheet of water with such a musical and expressive appellation, especially if the lake is as long as its name? How different from the "four sneezes of a Russian name," which bristles with consonants enough, De Quincey says, to splinter the teeth of a crocodile. How superior in euphony this Indian tongue to the Mexican, in which "I love you" is *ni-mitstskikawaka-tlasolta*, and a kiss is *tetennamiguilitzli*! As a French writer who states this fact declares, "quand on a prononcé le mot, on a bien mérité la chose."

**The Plague of Satiety.** A TRAVELLER in Italy, who many years ago had gone the rounds of its public and private picture-galleries, complained in his journal — the well-known "Diary of an Invalid" — that, exquisite as was the enjoyment they yielded, they began at last to pall on the taste. After feasting his imagination in the galleries of Florence and Rome with the masterpieces of the pencil, he found that it required extraordinary excellence to stimulate his languid attention, and satisfy the increasing fastidiousness of his taste. Even famed paintings of Titian and Correggio detained him less than they deserved.

What a cruel deduction is this from the enjoyment which we expect to derive from familiarity with excellence and from increase of knowledge! Of course, in regard to merely sensual gratification, we know perfectly well that a time must come at last when the senses are sated, when the keen edge of the sensibilities is blunted, when the happiness ceases to satisfy, and the pleasures lose the power of pleasing. Wilberforce, in speaking of the Richmond villa

of the Duke of Queensbury, whose personal property exceeded a million pounds, gives a vivid illustration of this: "I always observe that the owners of your grand houses have some snug corner in which they are glad to shelter themselves from their own magnificence." He adds that when a young man he once dined with the Duke, at his villa, along with a party of celebrated guests. "The dinner was sumptuous, the views from the villa quite enchanting, and the Thames was in all its glory; but the Duke looked on with indifference. 'What is there,' he said, 'to make so much of in the Thames? I am quite tired of it; *there it goes, flow, flow, flow, always the same.*'"

We can easily understand why the glorious scene was a sealed book to the worn voluptuary, why his spirit's eye was blind to it, and that the full enjoyment of natural beauty is reserved for men of nobler minds and purer lives. But is it not a sad reflection that often even the latter grow less happy as they grow wiser; that those men who are at the most pains to see the best that is to be seen, to hear the best that is to be heard, and to read the best that is to be read, are only laboring, in most cases, to exhaust the sources of innocent gratification, and incapacitating themselves for future enjoyment, by approaching that condition which has been described as a state of —

"Painful pre-eminence, yourself to view  
Above life's weakness, and its comforts too"?

Fortunately, all men are not thus constituted. A few there are who, by a happy alchemy, are able to extract even keener and keener delight from each successive draught of the cup of innocent pleasure which they have found suited to their taste. Macaulay declared that he had

no pleasure from books which equalled that of reading over for the hundredth time great productions which he almost knew by heart; and what he said of books might doubtless be said by other persons of music, scenery, and many other sources of enjoyment. But how is *fastidium* to be avoided by those who are conscious of a tendency to the disease? Henri-Frédéric Amiel has answered the question: "By shutting our eyes to the general uniformity, by laying stress upon the small differences which exist, and then by learning to enjoy repetition. What to the intellect is old and worn out is perennially young and fresh to the heart; curiosity is insatiable, but love is never tired. The natural preservative against satiety, too, is work. What we do may weary others; but the personal effort is, at least, useful to its author. Where every one works, the general life is sure to possess charm and savor, even though it repeat forever the same song, the same aspirations, the same prejudices, and the same sighs."

A better antidote than this of the half-Christian agnostic to the satiety which "mocks the tired worldling" is, when his

"pleasures cloy,  
To fill the languid pause with finer joy;"

to substitute for such luxuries one that has never been known to pall, — "the luxury of doing good." Of this cup of pleasure he can drink with no fear of surfeit; on the contrary, the appetite "grows by what it feeds on," and the delight yielded by its gratification is the most exquisite which the true epicure can know.

**"My Poor Memory."** ONE of the most foolish complaints a man can make, is that of having a poor memory.



Why is a man's memory weak? Simply because of his lack of painstaking, — of attention. If your memory seems treacherous, and like a bag with holes lets everything slip through which you put into it, it is simply because you do not care to remember, or are too lazy to take the necessary steps to do it. So far from being treacherous, the memory is one of the most faithful of all our faculties. No other one is more surely or rapidly strengthened by exercise. It is doubtful if anything once lodged in the memory is ever forgotten. Knowledge, it has been beautifully said, may slumber there, but it never dies; it is like the dormouse in its home in the ivied tower, — that sleeps while winter lasts, but wakes with the warm breath of spring.

In acquiring knowledge, time is a most important fact. There must be an incessant iteration of the newly-acquired ideas, till they are linked to the old by suggesting chains. The new knowledge must be brooded over, meditated upon, and turned over and over in the mind, till it is not only added to the old, but interpenetrates it. Lawyers understand this, and hence their "damnable iteration" of important principles and testimony in addressing juries. Porson, who had a prodigious memory, and declared that he could learn by heart a copy of the London "Morning Chronicle" in a week, said that he had acquired his quickness and tenacity of memory only by intense labor. "Sometimes," he added, "in order to impress a thing upon my memory, I have read it a dozen times, and transcribed it six." Dickens had a marvellous power of recollection; but why? Because his powers of attention and observation were marvellous. Don't say, therefore, that you would acquire this or that art or science, a knowledge of history or of literature, etc., but for your "wretched

memory;" but confess that while you would like to possess these laudable accomplishments, you do not covet them earnestly enough to pay the price. All you care for is the empty applause, not the substantial accomplishment.

**Marvellous Memories.** OF course, memories differ naturally in tenacity and readiness. Seneca, it is said, could repeat two thousand names in the exact order in which they had been rehearsed to him. Scaliger could repeat a hundred lines after one reading. He learned Homer in twelve days, and all the Greek poets in four months. Justus Lipsius had all Tacitus by heart, and pledged himself to repeat word by word any passage called for, allowing a dagger to be thrust into his body if he made a single slip or false repetition. Mozart, whose musical compositions, however long, "stood," as he said, "almost completely finished in his mind, so that he could survey them, like fine pictures or beautiful statues, at a glance," wrote out his matchless opera of "Don Giovanni" from memory in two hours on the morning preceding the evening of its first performance. Hardly a whit less marvellous than these feats of memory were those of a Boston boy (we call him such, for he was born in Boston), Lord Lyndhurst. In speaking at the bar, on the bench, or in the House of Lords, he never used notes. In the case of "Small *vs.* Atwood," which lasted twenty-one days, the judgment he pronounced was entirely oral; and, without referring to a note, he spent a long day in reciting complicated facts, in making complicated calculations, and in correcting the misrepresentations of counsel on both sides. Never once did he falter or hesitate, and never once was he mistaken touching a name, a figure, or a date. Evidently, had his

lordship been a teacher he would not have found the slightest difficulty in complying with Juvenal's test, — namely, that he should be able, if questioned at hazard on his way to the baths of Phœbus, to tell instantly the name of Anchises' nurse, the name and native land of the step-mother of Anchemolus, and how many flagons of wine the Sicilian king gave to the Phrygians. A memory so phenomenal must have been naturally tenacious, but by what enormous painstaking must it have been brought to its final perfection!

**Self-Confidence and Success.** DR. JOHNSON, in speaking of the complaint that a man of merit is often neglected by the world, declares that the sentiment is unjust: "It is generally by his own fault that he fails of success. A man may hide his head in a hole." That this is a frequent cause of failure, who can doubt? It is a wise saying of Bacon, that to enter the kingdom of knowledge "we must put on the spirit of little children," — that is, we must submit to be taught by any one who can teach us; but to enter the kingdom of wealth or celebrity, a manly, self-reliant spirit is necessary. Of what use are the most brilliant abilities if they are continually hidden in a napkin, — secreted from observation and unused, instead of being made known to the arbiters of place and honor? We all dislike what is called "forwardness" in a young man; yet it is far preferable to excessive timidity, as superfluity is preferable to penury. Time will correct the one, but it is exceedingly doubtful if it will ever infuse life and spirit into the other. "My own experience of life," says Sir James Stephen, "has taught me, that, much and frequently as the faults of self-confidence and self-conceit are denounced

by our teachers, they are faults far less widely diffused, and far less dangerous in their tendency, than a timid self-distrust and a craven self-depreciation."

There is no doubt that a great deal of ability is lost to the world for want of a little courage and self-confidence. Every day sends to their graves obscure men who have been obscure only because their self-distrust has prevented them from making a beginning, — from ascertaining their strength by a fair trial. There was a time, in his early life, when even Daniel Webster, with all his transcendent abilities, was disposed to think meanly of himself. "My abilities," he wrote to a friend, "are small, very small." Had he continued to indulge this self-distrust, he would never have risen to be one of the greatest lawyers and statesmen in America, or to make that reply to Hayne which is the highwater mark of eloquence since Demosthenes. "The pious and just honoring of ourselves," says John Milton, "is the radical moisture and fountain-head from whence every laudable and worthy enterprise issues forth." True as this was in the great Puritan's day, the lapse of two centuries has made it truer still. We live in an age of intense competition and loud, noisy self-assertion; and the timid, sensitive man, who cannot cast aside his shyness and squeamishness and do a little violence to his feelings, who cannot say that he wants anything, or cannot say it with sufficient loudness and pertinacity, must expect not only to be outstripped in life's race, but knocked down and trampled under foot in the rush and roar of this nineteenth century.

In spite of all the praises of modest merit, it is plain that the thick-skinned, loud-voiced, pushing man will always have an advantage over the diffident, retiring one in the



tiger-like struggles of life. It is not because the former qualities are more respected than the latter, but because they are usually allied with others — such as decision, promptness, and energy — without which worth is inoperative. A barking dog is more useful than a sleeping lion. As Ulysses says in “Troilus and Cressida,” —

“A stirring dwarf we do allowance give  
Before a sleeping giant.”

We all, in the depth of our heart, esteem the men of fine feelings, refined tastes, and shrinking modesty, — the

“Delicate spirits pushed away  
In the hot press of noonday;”

but the prizes of life are not won by such shy folk. “He who is silent,” says Amiel, “is forgotten; he who does not advance, falls back; he who stops is overwhelmed, distanced, crushed; he who ceases to grow greater, becomes smaller; he who leaves off, gives up. . . . To live is to achieve a perpetual triumph; it is to assert one’s self against destruction, against sickness, against the annulling and dispersion of one’s physical being. It is to will without ceasing; or, rather, it is to refresh one’s will day by day.”

**Was it Suicide?** Is suicide less suicide when it is slow, — when a man knowingly kills himself by a succession of acts, instead of by one blow? A great deal of sympathy has been expressed for an author, the late R. L. Stevenson, because he is supposed to have weakened his constitution by overwork; but, according to a writer in the Chicago “Open Court,” the main cause of his death was probably his consumption of tobacco. Two years



before his death he confessed that his bill for cigars amounted to \$450 a year; and during the last six months of his life he smoked an average of forty cigarettes per day, and often as many as *eighty in twenty-four hours!* Can any one wonder that this frightful habit induced chronic insomnia, to cure or lessen which he smoked all night, till narcosis of the brain brought on stupefaction and temporary loss of consciousness, — for weeks his nearest approach to refreshing slumber? His physician warned him in vain that he was burning life's candle at both ends, for he tried to write in spite of his misery; but he stuck to nicotine as the only specific for his nervousness, with the result that was inevitable, — his death a year afterwards.

**Needless Noise.** ONE of the marks of advancing civilization is the protest which men are beginning to make, in our large cities at least, against needless noise. Men are beginning to feel that it is a savage and barbarous taste which finds delight in it. Scientists affirm that the hundred noises in our large towns — even those of which we are not conscious when engaged in our daily occupations — all do more or less injury to the fine texture of the nerves. In London the street-cries are ceasing, and silence is coming to be recognized as conducive to both comfort and health. In this country, though we still submit to the clang of church-bells, the shriek of locomotives, and the hideous discords of hand-organs and street-bands, we are beginning to feel that they are both a nuisance and needless. The uproar of the night before the Fourth of July has been partially squelched, and possibly the bell-ringing on that day, and the 22d of February, and in Boston on Evacuation Day also, may ultimately be abandoned. Who

that loves quiet has not, for a moment, half wished on the last-named two days that Washington had been born on the 29th of February, and that he had not planted his cannon on Dorchester Heights?

In speaking of the peculiar conditions under which a man of rare genius perfects his creations, a recent writer compares the process to one of those delicate processes of crystallization so carefully watched over in the laboratory of the chemist, where an exactly even temperature must be preserved, and not so much as the lightest footfall jar the equilibrium of the liquid. Who can wonder that such men — or, indeed, that nearly all literary men, who have generally finely-strung and exquisitely-sensitive nerves — have a mortal antipathy to noise? Schopenhauer — whom, pessimist as he is, we shall always respect for his sentiment on this subject — declares that while ordinary men regard noise with stoical indifference, thinkers, and especially men of true genius, find it insupportable. “I have ever been of opinion,” he says, “that the amount of noise a man can support with equanimity is in inverse proportion to his mental powers, and may be taken, therefore, as a measure of intellect generally. If I hear a dog barking for hours on the threshold of a house, I know well enough what kind of brains I may expect from its inhabitants. He who habitually slams the door instead of closing it, is not only an ill-bred, but a coarse-grained, feebly-endowed creature.”

**Eminent**      THE biographies of many eminent men  
**Haters of**      confirm the opinion of Schopenhauer. Julius  
**Noise.**      Cæsar shuddered at the crowing of a cock;  
the poet Beattie suffered keenly from the same cause; and

the great German philosopher, Kant, abandoned a pleasant house because he could not bear the shrill notes of a neighbor's chanticleer. Wallenstein, though accustomed to the thunder of artillery and the clash of arms, could not endure at home the barking of dogs, nor even the clatter of the large spurs then in fashion. His servants glided about the rooms of his palace at Prague like phantoms, and to keep all noises at a distance, twelve men patrolled round it night and day. The Rev. F. W. Robertson, whose sermons are instinct with the finest genius, could not hear without torture a piano playing in the adjoining house. Heine was so sensitive to noise that even a clock ticking at night rendered him sleepless, and, next day, ill.

What would all these sensitive beings say and do, if they were alive to-day, residing in Boston, and "stretched on the rack of restless ecstasy," as some of us are, by the whistle of locomotives, the ding-dong of the fire-alarm, the daily and nightly rumbling and bell-ringing of electric cars, the wheezing and creaking of asthmatic hand-organs, the preprandial clatter of milk-carts, and all the other ear-torturing and nerve-rasping sounds which engender suicidal thoughts in our Boston Babel? If the Roman lyrist, Horace, with all his poetic gifts, could not meditate or compose his verse in a street where a contractor was hurrying along, puffing and blowing, with his mules and porters, a machine whirling aloft ponderous stones or beams, and funeral processions clashing with unwieldy wagons, — what shall a modern scribbler do, with but a tithe of his genius, amidst noises tenfold more torturing and confusing?

**A Spiritual Enigma.** WHY is it that the children of very intellectual parents, whose fathers and mothers

are both endowed with genius or remarkable ability, are often so dull, or at least mediocre, in ability? No satisfactory explanation has been given of this paradox, which so contradicts our natural expectation. The phenomenon would surprise us less if we would reflect that as matter often acts paradoxically, — as when two cold liquids united become boiling hot, or when the mixing of two clear liquids produces an opaque mud, — so spirit may, analogically, play similar pranks.

**No !**      SAINTE-BEUVE, the celebrated French critic, says of Fénelon, in his admirable *causerie* on the good bishop, that he lacked that irritability of good sense and of reason which makes one say “No” with vehemence, — that direct, prompt, and somewhat blunt faculty which Boileau carried into literature, and Bossuet into theology. This inability to say “No” with vehemence, or at least unalterably, has been the rock on which thousands of men have been shipwrecked who might otherwise have made life’s voyage victoriously. It makes “all the difference in the world” whether one contracts early a habit of uttering with facility and frequency the little monosyllable “Yes,” or that yet more diminutive one “No.” It may be an unpleasant fact to recognize, but it is none the less true that the contracting of the one habit or the other often determines the question whether one is to be a freeman or a slave; whether he is to be a help or a clog on the world’s progress; whether he is to roll through life in a coach-and-two, or hobble along on crutches.

The well-known conversationist, Richard Sharp, says of some noted man that his audible pronunciation of the two monosyllables “Ay” and “No” made his fortune.



But most fortunes have been lost by the utterance of the former. Among the tributes to the late editor of the *North American Review*, Allen Thorndike Rice, was one by his successor, Mr. Lloyd Bryce, who began it by saying that Mr. Rice knew how to say "No!" "When I was a child," Mr. Rice used to observe, "my mother would often stand me on a chair, and make me repeat 'No, no, no.' " Wise, terse teaching! In our schoolboy days we used to observe that "clever" (good-natured) boys, who were lackeys to other boys, were always in trouble. There was our playmate Simpkins, for instance, who was so excessively obliging: he was flogged again and again by the pedagogue, simply because he could not say *No* when he was teased by other boys to join in some scrape or escapade, or because, when he was wrongly accused of perpetrating their misdeeds, he was too tender-hearted to deny the charge and convict the real reprobates. Since Simpkins arrived at manhood, he has been continually pestered by duns and dogged by constables, not on account of his own debts, but because he could not refuse when asked to indorse the notes of other men. Truly has Dr. Johnson characterized "No" as "a monosyllable the easiest learned by a child, but the most difficult to practise by the man; which contains within it the import of a life, the weal or woe of an eternity!"

**The Advantages of Debt.** AMONG the threadbare themes of moralists, one of the most hackneyed is the misery of being in debt. Ever since the days of Addison and the *Spectator*, this has been a favorite and prolific topic of periodical essayists and writers on "Self-Help;" and if it be true of human afflictions that "they can paint



them best who feel them most," we cannot doubt the ability of these writers to present the matter in the most vivid colors. "I am astonished," says Sir Richard Steele, whose whole life was a race with bailiffs and catchpolls, and who excused himself for voting in flagrant contradiction to his professed principles by saying to one who reproached him, "Mr. Whiston, you can walk on foot, but I cannot," — "I am astonished that men can be so insensible to the danger of running into debt. One would think it impossible that a man who is given to contracting debts should not know that his creditor has, from that moment in which he transgresses payment, so much as that demand comes to, in his debtor's honor, liberty, and fortune." "Out of debt," echoes Douglas Jerrold, with the passionate eloquence of one tasting for the first time the luxury he describes, "and though you have a patch on your knee, a hole in your hat, and a crack in your shoe-leather, you are still the son of liberty, free as the singing lark above you. Out of debt, and what a nourishing sweetness may be found in cold water! what toothsome-ness in a dry crust! what ambrosial nourishment in a hard egg! . . . The debtor, what is he but a serf, out upon a holiday, — a slave, to be reclaimed at any instant by his owner, the creditor?"

This, it must be confessed, is well put, and by writers who are entitled to say, "Experto crede." But there is another side to the subject; and it is easy to show that if debt has its miseries, it has, by the never-failing law of compensation, its blessings too, which equal, if they do not more than counterbalance, them. If the condition of indebtedness is one of slavery, the long and splendid roll of men who have bowed to its yoke shows that it has a strange fascination. Lord Bacon wrote on "The Wisdom of Business," yet ran

desperately in debt. William Pitt had an income of thirty to fifty thousand dollars a year, and died two hundred thousand dollars in debt. Sheridan spent the fortunes of two wives, and was always dodging creditors and bailiffs. Daniel Webster had a large professional income, yet lived and died amid a swarm of debts. Was not Fielding swamped all his life by debt, and yet did not Lady Montagu say of him "that he had known more happy moments than any person on earth"?

But, not to rely on great names, who does not love to be "an object of interest" to his fellow-men? And what surer or easier way of becoming such than by contracting "little bills" and large in all quarters? Who is the object of more watchful attention, of tenderer and more anxious solicitude, on the part of his fellow-citizens, than he whose promises to pay are held year after year? Whose movements are watched more closely, whose health is inquired after with more trembling solicitude, whose death is mourned over with more poignant sorrow, than his who owes many thousands more than his estate can pay? There is no man who does not love to hold *some* place in the memories of his fellow-men, who does not cling to the pleasing hope that he will not become entirely "to dumb forgetfulness a prey" when he shall have shuffled off his mortal coil; and how can one more effectually guard against so painful a result than by leaving in the hands of his friends and neighbors, not a worthless lock of hair, but a more precious memorial in the shape of an unsettled bill or note-of-hand, the *interest* of which will be forever increasing? The memory of such a man will be cherished with the keenest interest; while he who is scrupulous to "pay as he goes" is doomed to hopeless obscurity while he lives, and when he

dies, is forgotten or thought of without a pang of regret. "We are not *great* people at all," said Sydney Smith when he went into a new neighborhood, and it was given out in the local papers that he was a man of high connections; "we are only *common*, honest people, — people that pay our debts." How vivid were Horace Greeley's recollections of poor Poe, whose autograph he held on several bits of paper, compared with his memory of other and even greater poets!

There is another advantage of debt of even greater moment; it gives a zest to life which nothing else can impart. The man in debt is never tormented with that uneasy listlessness, that restless craving without an object, that mobility without an aim, that feeling of idleness, yet of disquiet, which is known as *ennui*. Of that wretched feeling which led Spinoza to pass his time in catching spiders and teaching them to fight, and which drove the master spirit of antiquity, the Stagirite himself, when his wine of life had run to the lees, to die as the fool dieth, by his own hands, the debtor knows nothing. The fire of existence never with him becomes caky or ashy; his soul never preys upon itself; he experiences none of the miseries that steal in upon him whose life is free from anxiety or care. With the debtor, life is full of meaning and interest. He has a continual spur to exertion, and the pleasure of faculties kept perpetually on the stretch. While the minds of other men are drooping like a banner by a flag-staff for want of the wind of occasion to set them in motion, his is incessantly occupied with schemes to silence the importunate demands of creditors and to keep sheriffs from his door. Whether scouring the streets to borrow money or busied with schemes for earning it, he is thoroughly engrossed in the passing day, and has not a

moment for the torture of excessive ease. Of the "blue devils" he knows nothing; he has never to contrive expedients for killing time; nor does he ever think of hanging himself, as many a debt-free rich man has done, lest he should one day come to want. Occupied continually with the care of meeting or dodging obligations that are falling due, his "quick thoughts like lightning are alive;" all his hours are filled with excitement and action; and if, as the author of "Festus" says, "he whose heart beats quickest lives the longest," then assuredly does the debtor

"Live in one hour more than in years do some  
Whose fat blood sleeps as it slips along their veins."

**Some Modern Authors.** LUTHER, in his "Table Talk," tells of a certain lazy monk, too idle to say his prayers, who used to repeat the alphabet, and then add: "Take, O Lord, these letters, and then put them together even as thou wilt." Some of our modern hazy and obscure poets, with their chaotic thoughts and half-told visions, seem to have imitated this labor-saving monk. Instead of spending years of toil upon their verse, till happy conceptions are wedded to apt expression, they virtually say to their readers: "Take these poetical ideas and these poetical terms, and put them together to your fancy." Another class of writers, prose and poetical, who have a rare mastery of style, but only trivial or commonplace ideas, remind one of Thackeray's description of George IV.; namely, "A waistcoat, an underwaistcoat, another underwaistcoat, and then nothing."

**Church Sleepers.** WHAT shall be done with church sleepers? Many remedies have been tried, but all have



proved but partially successful. A Scotch preacher once recommended snuff to some of his drowsy hearers, or rather pretended hearers, — to which one of them, who was evidently “up to snuff,” retorted that he had better put the snuff in his sermons. The witty Dr. South tried a shrewd device when King Charles, before whom he was preaching, fell asleep. Stopping short, he called out three times in a loud tone, “Lord Lauderdale!” His lordship stood up and looked at the preacher, who addressed him with great composure: “My lord, I am sorry to interrupt your repose; but I must beg of you not to snore so loud, lest you awake the king!” An old and eccentric preacher in Newburyport, Mass., who died about fifty years ago, was noted for the shrewd ways in which he would rouse the sleepers in his congregation. He was once preaching, on a warm afternoon, when he saw a parishioner in the gallery, whose Christian name was Mark, fast asleep. Suddenly the preacher stopped in the middle of a sentence, and raising his voice to the highest pitch, exclaimed, “Mark!” As if stricken by a thunderbolt, up jumped the awakened delinquent in the midst of the congregation, his mouth wide open, wondering who called him and for what, while the preacher, dropping his voice, went calmly on, and finished the following quotation from Scripture, as if it formed a part of his sermon: “Mark, I say, the perfect man, and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace.”

As prevention is better than cure, a method employed in an English country church to keep people awake may be recommended. During the service the beadle goes round the congregation with a long staff in his hand, at one end of which is a fox’s brush, and at the other a knob; when a female hearer begins to drowse, he tickles her face with



the brush, while on the heads of the nodding men he inflicts with the knob a sensible rap. But the masterpiece of devices for waking and keeping awake sleepy parishioners was that of a clergyman, who, on a sultry afternoon, paused in his sermon, and said, "I saw an advertisement last week for five hundred *sleepers* for a railroad. I think I could supply at least fifty, and recommend them as good and sound!" This is a better device than suddenly raising the voice, or letting it sink to a whisper; or, again, than sitting down and weeping, as Dr. Young, author of the "Night Thoughts," once did.

**Proving too Much.** THE maxim, "Answer a fool according to his folly," has a deeper philosophy than strikes one at first hearing. The best way sometimes to confute a person who reasons incorrectly is to let him confute himself by giving him the full swing of his absurdities. Some arguments carry their own refutation with them: you have only to leave the logic-chopper to himself, and let him push his reasoning to the utmost, and his argument becomes *felo de se*, — cuts its own throat. Such reasonings have been compared to wheels, where half a turn will put everything upside down that is attached to their peripheries; but if we complete the circle, all things will be just where we found them.

Thus Hooker, replying to those who oppose the use of reason in judging of scriptural truth, says that they never make more use of reason than when showing that reason should not be employed in the interpretation of Scripture. Again, Sydney Smith, replying to the objections urged against the higher education of women, says: "Now, we must really confess we have all our lives been so *ignorant*

as not to know the value of *ignorance*." Some years ago, during a capital trial in Maine, an attempt was made by the prisoner's counsel to show that the death of the person whom the prisoner was accused of having poisoned might have been caused by prussic acid spontaneously evolved from the stomach. The counsel, therefore, asked a physician, who appeared as a witness for the government, whether the poison did not sometimes act thus; to which the prompt reply was: "I don't know; but if such is the fact, it must be very dangerous to have a stomach!"

**Politeness Pays.** A good many anecdotes are told showing that politeness is often rewarded by material as well as by moral advantages, — such as the story of the general, who, by bowing to an inferior, escaped the loss of his head by a cannon-ball, etc.; but one of the best illustrations is the piece of good fortune which once befell Mrs. Dodd, wife of the well-known Dr. Dodd. In 1764 she attended an auction, where she bid for a cabinet, and was at once outbidden by another lady present. Mrs. Dodd immediately courtesied, and retired from the contest. The other lady, who had doubtless set her mind upon the article, and determined to capture it at whatever cost, was so delighted with the polite action of Mrs. Dodd that she expressed a desire for a better acquaintance, and shortly afterwards presented her with a lottery-ticket, which, upon the drawing, came up a prize of £1000.

**"Ill-Used Men."** ONE of the most unfortunate things that can befall a man who wishes to get on in the world, is to appear to be *ill-used*. As a rule, the men of brains or wealth or good birth have no occasion to com-

plain of the treatment they receive; it is the dull-witted and troublesome whom nobody can endure, or the poor and lowly about whom few care, that complain of being ill-used. Hence, when a man makes this complaint, he is likely to be regarded as one belonging to one or more of the former classes rather than to the latter, — a circumstance which may be no fault of his, or in any way discreditable to him, but is, nevertheless, damaging to his prospects in life. The reason of this is, that every man, however prosperous, has his own woes; and, needing to be associated with what is cheering and inspiring rather than with the depressing, he is naturally attracted to the gay, the buoyant, and the self-helpful, even without any thought of tangible benefits from them, rather than to “the child of misery, baptized in tears,” — the incompetent, gloomy “ne’er-do-weel.” Another reason why frequent complaint is injudicious is, that, being associated in our minds with infirmity, it tends to weaken our respect; nay, more, it excites our pity, and pity is allied to contempt. Of all disagreeable men, none is more generally shunned than the fretful, the fault-finding, grumbling man, — in short, the man with a grievance. On the other hand, next to the successful man, we respect the self-reliant one, who in ill fortune never by a murmur or look betrays injury or defeat.

The applicability of all this to professional men — to all who seek to gain a livelihood or to gratify their fellow-men by the brush, the chisel, or the pen — is evident. If such a man’s productions are neglected by the public, is it wise for him to complain? Will it help his case to show, however conclusively, that the neglect is due to misrepresentation, to prejudice, to lack of taste, and in no respect

to his lack of merit? Most certainly not. To rail at the stupidity of the public, to retort upon his critics, to assert that praise has been lavished on performances far inferior to his own, only brings down ridicule upon his head; it is to put himself in the humiliating attitude of an ill-used man. When a merchant learns that a bank has declined discounting his note, or that a great house has refused to fill his order, does he rush upon 'Change and proclaim his grievance? No; instead of such a suicidal policy, which would only sap his credit still more, he maintains a dignified silence. To advertise his ill-treatment would be as foolish as for a lady to complain of the loss of a front tooth.

Let no man, therefore, who wishes to gain or keep a respectable place in the world assume the character of a person who has been ill-used. Whatever the slights, injuries, or neglects from which you have suffered, do not for a moment think of avenging or redressing them by trumpeting them to the world, and boring your acquaintances with long and wearisome recitals of the snubs and humiliations of which you have been the victim. Are you a business man, and have you been cheated or swindled in any way? Hush the matter in the darkness of your own bosom. Are you an artist, and has the hanging committee at an exhibition put your picture up near the ceiling or down near the floor? Do not rail against the ignorance or prejudice of the committee, for if you do you will appear to the world as ill-used. Are you an author, and do editors or publishers reject the manuscript on which you have bestowed, perhaps, years of toil? Do not waste a minute's breath in trying to convince others of its merits, but work on to something which will need no vindication



but itself. Are you a candidate for office or place of any kind? Do not, if unsuccessful, go about complaining of your rejection, for on such occasions, above all others, it is absolutely ruinous to appear ill-used.

The English naval commander, Lord Cochrane (afterward Earl of Dundonald), was a striking example of the folly of complaints of ill-usage. As a naval commander, he exhibited a combination of daring and prudence which were not surpassed in Nelson himself. He did greater deeds with smaller means than any other naval hero recorded in history. With a trumpery little vessel of one hundred and fifty-eight tons, throwing a broadside of shot that weighed but twenty-eight pounds, he won, in 1801, the most brilliant naval victory of the war with Napoleon, against sixfold odds, and in a thirteen months' cruise captured fifty vessels, one hundred and twenty-two guns, and five hundred and thirty-four men. With such abilities he needed nothing but prudence and self-restraint to rise to the highest posts in the navy. Yet from early manhood to the close of his career he seems never to have been without a grievance. Exasperated at seeing mediocre men usurping, by the favor of powerful friends, places and honors which he felt belonged to himself, he got up a controversy with the Admiralty, and made himself, all his life, by his complaints, the chief impediment to his own success. Exposing the incompetency of commanders under whom he fought, he made them his deadly enemies; and they contrived, by false accusations and court influence, to have him convicted of a crime of which he was guiltless, fined £1,000, sentenced to imprisonment for a year, and dismissed from the naval service. "We admit," says a British reviewer, "the justice of almost all his censures; but why, oh, *why*,



did he not hold his tongue until he had won a place from which he might speak so as to command attention?"

Haydon, the painter, was similarly imprudent, and early got the name of an ill-used man. When his great picture of "Dentatus" was completed in 1809, it was hung in the octagon room of the Royal Academy, and he resented the act as an insult. The result was, that when he applied for admission as an associate he was refused. All his life he complained bitterly of public neglect, and finally, harassed by ever-increasing debts, committed suicide.

The brilliant critic and essayist, William Hazlitt, injured himself by posing as an ill-used man. Some of his writings, as an impartial critic remarks, "betray a pitiable sensitiveness to the little rubs and slights of life, — soreness about criticism, vexation about the superior social *éclat* of other literary laborers, — showing him to be 'raw' all over."

Not only individual men, but nations, sometimes acquire a chronic habit of complaining, and are ill-used only the more in consequence. Poland for sixty years proclaimed to the world the outrages of which she was successively being made the victim. Everybody admitted the iniquity of the "partitions" by the neighboring States; but it is not in human nature to endure a man or a State that is always telling of grievances, and so the wrongs of Poland became wearisome, and at last a bore. No power interposed to prevent her doom; and the victim of Russian, Prussian, and Austrian greed,

"Sarmatia fell, unwept, without a crime."

**Overcoming a Nickname.** WHAT is more vexatious than an offensive nickname? A coarse pun made by Herder

on Goethe's name rankled for nearly half a century in the great poet's mind, though no man could better have afforded to despise such a jest. There is a refinement of cruelty in some nicknames which recalls the barbarity of the old pagan persecutors of the Christians, who wrapped them up in the skins of wild beasts so that they might be worried and torn to pieces by dogs. The worst thing about these appellations is, that when a man is ticketed with one — especially if it be one of those that are pre-eminently witty and come to their inventors in a flash of inspiration — it sticks to him like the shirt of Nessus to Hercules; it is nearly impossible for the victim to throw it off. Nevertheless, such a feat has been performed, at least by a body of men.

In our own late Civil War, Stannard's Vermont brigade, which was mustered into service in 1863 and stationed at Washington, was dubbed "The Paper-Collar Brigade," because some of the men were seen wearing paper-collars. But after the battle of Gettysburg, in which they had fought the rebels with great valor, and by an enfilading fire made fearful havoc on Pickett's right and on Wilcox's left during the famous charge on the third day of the fight, the insulting nickname was never flung at them again. They had wiped it out with blood.

**Speculation and Practice.** WHAT a strange contradiction do the lives of authors often present to their writings! It was in the court of Ptolemy Philadelphus, or in the marble palaces of Syracuse, while wallowing in wealth and luxury, and robed in purple and fine linen, that Theocritus, the father and inimitable model of all other pastoral poets, wrote those idyls which are regarded as the

truest and most faithful pictures of that country life of which he knew nothing. Claudius, who tells us to crown the flowing bowl with laurel, was a teetotaler. Johnson, who wrote admirable essays on politeness, interrupted his opponents in conversation with "You lie, sir!" "You are a vile Whig, sir!" Rousseau, who died a martyr to his sensibility, betrayed each of his benefactors in turn, and sent his children to the foundling hospital. Sir William Blackstone, who so ably expounded the laws of England, exceeded the powers of an assignment. Young, whose Parnassus was a churchyard, and who drew his inspiration from the river Styx instead of from Hippocrene, was a place-hunter and a pleasure-seeker, who supped to satiety of worldly joys and then turned state's evidence against them. Colton, the epigrammatic moralist, who in his "Lacon" vehemently denounced self-murder, put a pistol-ball through his brain. Thomson, who sang the praises of early rising, used to lie abed till noon. Payne, who sang of "Home, sweet home," never had a home. The author of "There's a light in the window for thee" is reported to have died recently at the West in a prison. Brillat-Savarin, who wrote text-books for epicures, lived during the last ten years of his life on panada.

**The Origin of Some Popular Phrases.** ONE of the most interesting and profitable studies is that of words, and especially of popular phrases. A great deal of curious, recondite history is often wrapped up in them; but, unfortunately, the metamorphosis which they undergo in the lapse of time is such that the most cunning word-hunter is often puzzled to trace their origin. Let us consider a few of these phrases.

“In spite of one’s teeth” is said to date back to the time of King John of England, the violent and odious successor of Richard “the Lion-Heart,” who was hated by all classes of his subjects for his exactions and impositions. Early in his reign, he got a worthy Jew into his clutches, and drew out one of his teeth daily, until, after a fortnight of torture, the Jew yielded to the tyrant’s demands for money. Similarly, the phrase, “hauling over the coals” refers to a period in the twelfth or thirteenth century, when feudal barons extracted money from the Jews by suspending them above slow fires till they paid a ransom or died.

The political term “to rat,” used far more in England than in this country, originated in the time of George I. His enemies reviled the adherents of the court as “Hanover rats.” Not long after the accession of the House of Hanover to the English throne, some of the brown — that is, the German or Norwegian — rats were brought over to England; and, being much stronger than the black or common rats, they in many places quite extirpated the latter. At first, the word — both the noun and the verb “to rat” — was levelled at the converts to the government of George I.; but gradually it obtained a wider meaning, and came to denote any sudden and mercenary change in politics.

The expression “to smell a rat,” meaning to conceive a suspicion, is said to come from the German phrase *Unrath wittern*, to smell something objectionable. The German prefix *un* has passed into the English article *a*, and this and a perverted translation have given us the phrase in question.

In the phrase “dowse the glim” (put out the light), the

word "dowse" is from the dialectic verb *dout*, — that is, to do out, or put out; and "glim" is a modification of "glimmer," an uncertain light.

"To sleep like a top" seems a very absurd phrase. It is a corruption of the French proverb, "*dormir comme une taupe*," to sleep like a *mole*.

"Just the cheese" is an Oriental phrase. The word "cheese," from *cheez*, Hindoostanee, means "thing."

In England, persons who fawn upon the aristocracy are called tuft-hunters, — a phrase which refers to the fact that at the universities of Oxford, Cambridge, and Dublin, a student who is a nobleman's son wears, or at one time wore, a tuft or tassel on the square cap worn by undergraduates at the university.

"The bitter end" refers to the end of a ship's cable fastened to the "bitts," — a frame of two strong pieces of timber fixed perpendicularly in the fore part of the ship, for the purpose of holding the cables. The other end is fastened to the anchor. When the cable is out to "the bitter end," it is all out; the extremity has come.

A "toad-eater" is one who does the most nauseous things to please his patrons, — as a mountebank's boy in the olden time ate toads in order to show his master's skill in expelling poison.

"Stealing another man's thunder" dates back to Queen Anne's time, in England. John Dennis, a minor man of letters whom Pope satirized, wrote a tragedy entitled "Appius and Virginia." The piece is now recollected only by the circumstance that the author invented some new thunder for the performance, and by his piteous complaint against the actors for afterwards "stealing his thunder," an expression which became proverbial.



The phrase "to toll a bell" has a very curious history. It is an incorrect way of saying, "to toll a knell on a bell." When an inhabitant of an English parish died, it was once customary to sound the church bell, for two reasons, — first, because it was supposed that the agitation of the atmosphere caused by the sound from consecrated bells tended to prevent evil spirits molesting the parting soul in its flight toward heaven; and, second, to invite neighbors and friends to join in supplication for the person about to depart. At the end of the knell proper it was usual to indicate, by some peculiarity in the ringing, the sex and age of the deceased; and this was done by a certain number of strokes sounded apart, — usually three for a child, six for a woman, and nine for a man. These strokes were counted, and thus the knell at the conclusion was said to be *told*; that is, counted, — as in the phrase "untold gold," or, "Here is the sum twice told." Gradually this idea was lost, and the participle *told* was referred to a supposed infinitive, *to toll*, instead of its natural infinitive, *to tell*, or count. Again, the strokes *told*, or counted at the end of a knell, were called *tellers*, and this term was corrupted into *tailors*, from their sounding at the end or *tail* of the knell; and as nine of these were given to announce the death of an adult male, this fact gave birth to the saying, "Nine tailors make a man."

The phrase "Mind your P's and Q's" is generally, but erroneously, supposed to have originated in the score of P's and Q's (pints and quarts) chalked up in bar-rooms in the case of customers who did not pay down for their drinks. The phrase comes from the printing-office, and is due to the similarity in form of the lower-case or small p and q in a font of roman letter, leading a novice to mix them when distributing type into the cases.

“Turning the tables” on an opponent is an expression derived from the game of backgammon. “Back-gammon” is the game (*gamon*) of the trough (*boc*), but in early times it was called *the game of tables*. “To turn the tables,” or backgammon board, is to reverse the relative position of two antagonists; and hence they are said to be turned upon a player whose fortune has been adverse.

In Cornwall, England, smoked pilchards are called “Fair Maids,” — a singular name, of which Prof. Max Müller gives the following explanation: “These smoked pilchards are largely exported to Genoa, and are there eaten during Lent. They are called in Italian *fumada*, ‘smoked fish.’ The Cornish sailors picked up that word, naturalized it, gave it an intelligible meaning, and thus became, according to their own confession, exporters of fair maids. You see the Odyssey and the adventures of Ulysses are nothing, compared with the adventures of our words.”

“Going the whole hog,” which is almost universally regarded as a characteristic American phrase, is said to be of Hibernian coinage. Before the year 1825 the silver shilling in Ireland was equivalent to thirteen pence, or one penny more than the English one. The former coin was sometimes called “a thirteen,” and sometimes “a hog.” When an Irishman, not chary of expense, spent an entire shilling in entertaining a friend, he was said “to go the whole hog.”

**Gothic Puddings.** How full the world is of one-idea people, — dwarfed specimens of humanity, of whom a dozen or more are needed to make a complete man; clergymen who have a white neckcloth idea of the world; law-

yers who are mere bundles of precedents, or walking digests of decisions in law and equity; doctors who are incarnated pharmacopœias; weavers who are but animated shuttles, and laborers who are little more than spades that dig, eat, and sleep! Everybody has heard of the mathematician who read “Paradise Lost,” and, hearing it praised, asked what it proved. But the most extraordinary case of one-ideaism that we have ever heard of was that of Pugin, the great English architect, whose Catholic conscience would not allow him to design or build a Protestant church, and who thought it astonishing that a friend of his — a man of extraordinary talents — should live in a house without mullion windows! Accepting, once, by letter, an invitation to stay with a friend, he expressed himself as unable to eat puddings unless they were Gothic in form, and enclosed in his letter a design for a Gothic pudding. No wonder that, after building a score of Gothic churches in different parts of England, he died (in 1852) in a lunatic asylum.

**Is Wit Transient?** Yes, says that acute thinker and polished writer, Mark Pattison. “No [other] product of the human mind is so transient as a jest. Taste, in the ridiculous, changes as rapidly as dress. The grandsons of those who had enjoyed the salt of Plautus, thought their ancestors stupid boors for having done so. We have all read of that old Earl of Norwich, whose conceits, brilliant in the court of Charles I., were found insufferable thirty years afterward in that of Charles II. Like perfume, the more subtle and ethereal a piece of humor is, the less it is portable.” There is truth in this, but is it not greatly exaggerated? The men who heard Harcastle’s story of

"Old Grouse in the gun-room," in Goldsmith's play "She Stoops to Conquer," did not agree with Mark Pattison: "Your worship must not tell that story, if we are not to laugh. I can't help laughing at that; we have laughed at it these twenty years."

Is the wit of Shakespeare, Sheridan, and Sydney Smith, or the humor of Chaucer, Cervantes, and Charles Lamb, less keenly appreciated and enjoyed than when they lived? Is there any subtler wit in the whole range of literature than the delicate and playful irony, the exquisite and inimitable pleasantry, with which that deadly controversialist Pascal exposed the sophistries and equivocations of the Jesuits, in the "Provincial Letters," and yet is not that wit as piquant to-day as it was two centuries ago? Is the mocking satire of Voltaire, the brilliant pleasantry of De Maistre, or the stinging sarcasm of Swift, so *fade* that now after a hundred or more years we cannot feel its point? Could one possibly conceive of an age when the pungent witticisms of Douglas Jerrold, or the crushing retorts of Dr. Johnson, would fail to electrify the hearer? Of course, where the comprehension or appreciation of wit depends upon a knowledge of local customs or of the manners of a particular age or country, — as in the case of the satires of Erasmus and Hutten, or of Butler's "Hudibras," — the jest loses its charms; we cannot laugh at jokes which require a perpetual commentary. But this the great works of humor do not demand.

**English and American Lecturers.** AN accomplished English friend, who has heard many of the best lecturers in his own country and America, asks us, "Why are English lecturers generally inferior in attractiveness to



American?" That they are inferior, if not in the matter, yet in the manner, of their lectures, will be admitted, we think, by all impartial judges. Where is the English lecturer that can at once instruct and fascinate an audience as did G. W. Curtis, Henry Ward Beecher, Wendell Phillips, T. Starr King, Horace Mann, R. W. Emerson, and G. S. Hillard, in the days of their highest power? The *gaucherie* of some very able Englishmen on the platform is surprising to their American cousins. Some twenty years ago, an eminent Professor from Oxford University very kindly addressed the faculty and students of the University of Chicago on some of the differences between the methods of education at the English universities and those at the universities and colleges of the United States. Admirable in substance and deeply interesting in matter, the address was delivered in the most frigid and unattractive manner, without force or emphasis. With his left hand in his trousers pocket, his right clenching the desk, and with his eyes directed to the floor rather than to his hearers, he spoke for about an hour in the tones of a worn and wearied curate. Matthew Arnold's lectures in this country were delivered with a similar stiffness and coldness, not to say awkwardness, of manner; and in spite of the knowledge, insight, and acuteness of observation which they manifested, and their felicity of style, they would have proved a failure had he not, after his first appearance on the platform in New York, taken lessons in elocution. Some years ago we heard, at the Working Men's College in London, a brief address by an eminent English author, who stammered and floundered and gesticulated all the way through, with the awkwardness and maladroitness of a country bumpkin.



What is the cause of this infelicity? Not lack of self-reliance certainly, for than the Englishman there is not a more self-reliant man on the globe. One explanation, we believe, is that inborn and ingrained shyness, of which he can no more rid himself than of his skin, — that *mauvaise honte*, bashfulness, reserve, call it what you will, of the Englishman, which makes him when travelling by rail seek an empty compartment in which to avoid companionship, and on entering the dining-room of his club to look out for an unoccupied table; which made Charles Mathews take long circuits in the lanes or by-ways of London to avoid recognition; which rendered Garrick, when testifying as a witness at Baretti's trial, so perplexed and confused that the judge dismissed him from the witness-box as incapable of giving evidence; which nearly drove Archbishop Whately, when at Oxford, to despair; which led Sir Isaac Newton to forbid the publication of his solution of the theory of the moon's rotation round the earth, lest it might increase his acquaintance, — “the thing which I chiefly study to decline;” and which appears to have been pre-eminently characteristic of Shakespeare himself. Washington Irving, who lived much in England, and was thoroughly English in his tastes, had the same trait, and could not give even an after-dinner toast without spasms of alarm.

Another reason for the inferiority in question is the almost total, if not total, lack of elocutionary training in the English schools, large and small. Charles Astor Bristed, who was educated both at Yale College and at the University of Cambridge, England, in speaking, in his “Five Years in an English University,” of the two great results of college education, which he says most Americans,

including most of the students themselves, look to,—namely, excellence in public speaking and writing, — observes that he found among both the older and the younger men of the English University an utter undervaluation of, and almost a contempt for, rhetoric and oratory. They looked down upon the art of public speaking as something necessarily shallow, insincere, and ignoble, — in short, as charlatanism. Again, the education one receives at an English University, according to Mr. Bristed, is not only negatively, but positively, unfavorable to fluency. “The habit of weighing every word may be all the better in the end for a man who has real oratorical genius, but is certainly all the worse for an ordinary debater.” Still another disadvantage is an excessive fastidiousness produced in these great schools by hypercriticism, which paralyzes oratorical effort.

Just the reverse of all this is the attention paid to public speaking in American schools. In nearly all the American colleges declamations of selected pieces are required of the students in the lower classes, and of original orations by the students in the upper classes, as regularly, though not as often, as attendance on recitations and lectures in other departments of education. In all the American academies and preparatory schools also, public and private, students are regularly drilled in elocution, and prizes are offered for the highest excellence at the public exhibitions. To win these prizes, students who are able to do so not infrequently employ at their own expense professors of elocution to instruct and drill them in their art. It is true, perhaps, that at Harvard University less attention is given to elocution than formerly; but at Yale annual prizes have just been instituted for proficiency in the art. Even in the

exhibitions of the Sunday Schools, almost the very youngest pupils mount the rostrum and "speak a piece." The result of all this is, that when the college graduate rises to speak in public, instead of being petrified by the "sea of upturned faces," and "throttling his practised accents in his fears," or manifesting a lack of ease and skill in the management of his voice, he speaks with much of the confidence, self-possession, and naturalness of the practised orator.

That this readiness, ease, and fluency are often obtained at the cost of higher and more sterling qualities — that they are too apt to be preferred to that profound knowledge and thorough comprehension of a subject which, owing to the consequent *embarras des richesses*, hems and stammers in struggling to condense itself into expression — is most true. But, on the other hand, is it not pitiful to see a man who has enjoyed all the educational advantages which a great university can give, standing dumb as a heathen oracle, or helplessly stumbling over his own words and gesticulating like a clown, whenever he is called upon to give utterance to his thoughts at a public meeting?

**An Ignominious Destiny.** "To what base uses we may return, Horatio!" exclaims Hamlet; and he proceeds to suggest that Alexander's noble dust might be found, if traced, stopping a bunghole, and that —

"Imperial Cæsar, dead and turn'd to clay,  
Might stop a hole to keep the wind away."

But these base uses of great men's dust, imaginary though they are, hardly surpass the ignominy to which one of the monarchs of Egypt was actually subjected a few years

ago. Think of the “father of the mighty line of Pharaohs” figuring as dried fish in the customs entries in his own land! Such, however, was the description under which the founder of the Pharaonic dynasty was suffered to pass through the land over which he once swayed the kingly sceptre. M. Maspero, leaving the Booklah Museum in view of the contingencies that might arise during the British campaign in Egypt, determined to take with him the mummy of Merenra, the most ancient of the Pharaohs. At the railway station the booking-clerk refused to pass the preserved monarch, unless his value was declared and a corresponding payment made; this was not easy to do, and so it was arranged that first-class fare should be paid for his defunct majesty. But then there were the *octroi*, or city duties, to be paid at Alexandria; so, looking over the lists, M. Maspero found that salt-fish paid but a mere trifle upon entry; and accordingly, we are told, the first Pharaoh of Egypt entered the last city of his empire as dried fish, paying the corresponding tax! What a vivid illustration of the well-known saying of Sir Thomas Browne: “Mummy is become merchandise, Misraim heals wounds, and Pharaoh is sold for balsams!” Merenra’s descendants are no longer in their narrow sepulchres, or they would turn in them on learning that their great progenitor had been disgracefully smuggled through his own dominions as a package of dried and salted fish.

Ignominious as was the fate of the Egyptian monarch, it was hardly more so than that of the Egyptians whose mummies, as Gibbon tells us, were deposited by their sons, as securities for loans, with money-lenders. Merenra’s destiny has been paralleled in modern times by that of Richelieu, — the virtual monarch of France, — whose body,



in 1793, was torn from the grave in the church of the Sorbonne and rudely trampled under foot, after the head had been cut off and exhibited to the bystanders. Passing into the possession of a grocer, the head was sold to M. Armez *père*, and transferred successively to several persons, till at last attempts were made, but made in vain, in 1846 and 1855, by the Historical Committee of Arts and Monuments, to repair the profanation. "We accuse no one," says Feuillet de Conches, who relates these incidents in his "*Variétés d'Histoire et d'Art*;" "still, the fact is undeniable that this terrible head, the personification of the absolute monarchy killing the aristocratic monarchy, is wandering upon the earth like a spectre that has straggled out of the domain of the dead." In the same year the fine marble statue of the great Cardinal at the Château de Melraye was decapitated, and the head used by an ultra-republican of the district as a balance-weight for a roasting-jack!

**Conscience and Umbrellas.** WHY is there so little conscientiousness regarding the appropriation of umbrellas? Every man who has owned, or rather fancied he owned, an umbrella, must have discovered that there is something peculiar about this species of property which differentiates it from every other chattel or hereditament. "'T was mine, 't is his, and has been slave to thousands," is a well-worn saying of Shakespeare, which is as true of almost every umbrella as of gold and silver coin. Umbrellas are a puzzle to us; there is a mystery, an enigma, about them which we cannot penetrate. That they are actually sold, that people do buy and pay cash for them, under the fond illusion that they acquire in them an exclusive property, is



evident from the fact that shops are established, and kept open for years, where you see these volatile and inconstant articles exposed for sale. Besides, how often do you hear some confiding man or woman, who has cherished the ridiculous idea of property in these articles, lamenting most pathetically the loss, by abduction or exchange, of a treacherous fabric of silk and whalebone (which he solemnly protests that he had paid for) on the very day he had naïvely attempted to make it his own! So umbrellas are bought by some persons, incredible as it may seem; but what a purchase! One might as well buy a will-of-the-wisp, a rainbow, a *fata morgana*, or a cubic acre of wind, in the hope of holding it permanently or selling it some day at an advance.

Umbrellas have no adhesiveness, no tenacity. No sooner have you begun to cultivate their acquaintance — friendship is out of the question — than, like a pickpocket at sight of a constable, like a sailor's money on shore, or a five-dollar bill changed into silver, they vanish from sight. No man can ever safely say, "I own an umbrella," unless at that moment he grasps it in his hand. The man to whom you might safely intrust your diamonds, your watch, or your gold, proves false when, in a moment of unsuspecting confidence, you lend him your umbrella. Consciences that in other cases are tremblingly sensitive regarding the slightest infringement upon the rights of property, are absolutely torpid when the property is an umbrella. Dean Buckland, an English prelate, was so convinced of this by his own bitter experience, that he had engraved upon his last *parapluie* these words: "Stolen from the Dean of Westminster." Even this lack of conscientiousness is not more amazing than the tameness with which men acquiesce in

the robbery of an umbrella. He who would be furious, and who would seek instant redress, if robbed of a coat or a hat; who would pursue the boy that had stolen fruit from his apple-tree, and raise an instant hue-and-cry against the thief who had snatched his watch, or even his walking-stick; will meekly submit to the appropriation of his "rain-screen," and redress his injury by a foolish investment in another.

It will, doubtless, be said that some of the vagrancy of umbrellas may be attributed to mistakes, especially at hotels. But — pardon us, reader — how happens it, in that case, that nobody ever mistakes a poorer one for his own? Why is it that only the old, worn-out, faded, and ugly ones are left in the rack? Why is it that cotton umbrellas are never taken by accident for silk? These are notable phenomena, which utterly upset the beautiful theory of mistakes, and awaken grave suspicions of design. Let your umbrella be exchanged twice or thrice in this way, and you will find yourself to have sunk from a light, elegant, ivory-handled, silk article, which cost you ten or twelve dollars, to a blue, brass-ringed dowdy, which turns inside out at the first gust of wind, and was worth when new hardly a tithe of that sum.

In opposition to what we have said of the vagrancy of umbrellas, a Kansas editor asserted, some years ago, that there was an old gentleman in Booneville, in that State, who had carried the same identical umbrella every day in the week for sixteen consecutive years! (Jupiter Pluvius must have been in the ascendant there!) But this assertion, staggering to one's credulity as it is, sinks into insignificance when compared with an astounding statement made by the Salem (Mass.) "Register." The editor of

that journal once had the hardihood to assert that a gentleman in that city of marvels had an umbrella, *still in good order*, — mark that! — which he had used on all proper occasions for — what length of time do you guess, reader? For a month, six months, or, possibly, a year? No, but for *forty-seven years!* He “imported it from Liverpool, and it had been serviceable during nearly half a century!” In all that long time it had not been damaged, exchanged, or stolen.

That will do! Human credulity, we are aware, has depths which no line or plummet can fathom. History and biography show that the acutest and most sagacious men have been the victims of the most unaccountable hallucinations. Socrates believed in a prompting dæmon, by whom he was always attended; Luther, in a malicious imp, by whom he was always flouted. Dr. Johnson, as everybody knows, believed in the second sight and the Cock lane ghost; De Quincey fancied he had a hippopotamus, or some other horrid creature, in his stomach; Professor Hare believed in the rapping revelations of defunct Washingtons and Websters; Professor Huxley, who rejects Christianity, is said to be a devout believer in the existence of the sea-serpent, and declares that those who laugh at the idea of a monster of the deep, big enough to drag down whole ships and their crews, are both foolish and ignorant. But none of these delusions, absurd and ridiculous as they are, approximate in grossness to the hallucination of the man who tells, or the person who credits, the Salem umbrella-story. The man who can believe it will swallow all the stories of the Talmud and the narrations of Trenck and Munchausen with his eyes wide open.

**Queer Roads to Fame.** It is said that the Duke of Wellington once “chaffed” Lord Brougham as a man who at one time bade fair to go down to future ages as a famous advocate of law-reform and popular education, but who, after all, would owe his renown to the name of the vehicle which had received his name. Brougham retorted by saying to the Duke that *his* name, which promised to descend to after-times as the hero of a hundred battles and the liberator of Europe, was to survive as the appellation of a certain kind of boots. The story is a good one, whether true or mythical, and suggests to us some of the strange ways in which men become famous.

One person acquires celebrity by his giant intellect, as Webster or Calhoun; another, by his dwarf stature, as Count Borowalski, or Tom Thumb. There are great men who are known to fame hardly less by their physical or moral eccentricities than by their intellectual might. Such was the case with Lord Brougham, who was long associated in men’s minds with the queer twist of his nose, on which Punch hung so many conceits; and with Lord Peterborough, who, walking from the market in a blue ribbon, with a fowl under one arm and a cabbage under the other, quite threw into the shade Lord Peterborough, the hero of Almanza. The same was the case with the great Duke of Marlborough, whose haggings with the Bath chairmen and acts of petty avarice were talked of long after the conqueror at Blenheim and Malplaquet was forgotten. Again, we saw, some fifty years ago, a Member of Congress from the West acquire a transatlantic reputation by the place and manner in which he chose to devour his luncheon of bread and sausages.



**Immortality in Law Reports.** QUEER as are all the above-mentioned ways to fame, an English barrister, in a recent volume of essays, has suggested another, by which men have unconsciously acquired celebrity without for a moment dreaming of such a result. He suggests that it may be some comfort to distressed plaintiffs or defendants in law-suits to reflect that to them may fall the honor of "leading cases!" "Perish all thoughts of costs in the presence of such a possibility! Immortality! Who was Twyne? Who was Spenser? Who was Shelley? We could repeat a long roll of the noble army of legal martyrs, most of whom would be absolutely wiped out of the memory of man but for the fact that fortune, or misfortune, drove them into litigation, whereby now and forever more they stand ennobled in Smith's or Tudor's 'Leading Cases.' Oblivion for them is an obsolete terror, a forgotten danger. A worthy old countrywoman remembered with satisfaction that the doctor had said that one of her grinders was the hardest tooth he had ever had to pull out in the whole country; and would she not have rejoiced at the pain that was the mother of immortality?"

Yes, doubtless; still, to this mode of winning fame the expense must be considered a great drawback, as I found when I was thus immortalized twice in the reports of the decisions of the Supreme Judicial Court of Maine. The cheapest immortality ever won was that gained by Eutychus, the young man noticed in the Acts of the Apostles, who went to sleep and fell out of a window while Paul was preaching. While all the other hearers of the apostle kept awake, and thus for doing their duty are forgotten, this drowsy fellow, this deaf dog, slept and snored himself into immortality!



**A Vivid Simile.** A WELL-KNOWN and well-worn excuse of college students for tardiness at prayers, recitation, or lecture, is, or used to be, "I didn't hear the bell." It is not often that the members of the faculty have (or have had) occasion to make the same plea; but many years ago the senior class of M—— University, New York, did actually complain to the board of trustees regarding the president's habitual lack of punctuality in meeting with them at the hour for lecture or recitation. Deeply aggrieved by this procedure, the "don," at the first subsequent recitation, gave expression to his feelings, and proceeded to state the causes of his tardiness, winding up his justification as follows: "And then, young gentlemen, our college bell, — who, with ordinary ears, can hear it? You know how faint and inaudible are its sounds, — that, in fact, it does n't make a whit more noise than a *sheep's tail swinging about in an old hat!*"

**Why go to College?** WHY should a man go to Oxford or to Cambridge, to Harvard or to Yale, for a liberal education? Is there no balm but in Gilead; no classic culture but among the willows of the Isis, no mathematical save among the reeds of the Cam; no mental training but on the banks of the Charles River, or under the elms of New Haven? Are there not hundreds of private teachers as competent and faithful as those in the universities and colleges? Yes; but the knowledge and training got in the class-room, or through tutorial preparation for "the Little Go" and "the Great Go," is but half — perhaps not even the most valuable half — of a college education. One of the chief advantages of that education

is the commingling of young men from all parts of the country; the attrition, the collision, of mind with mind; the clash of wit, the stinging jest, and the prompt retort; the living in an intellectual and electric atmosphere, where a certain amount of knowledge and of inspiration is absorbed unconsciously by the most heedless youth through the pores.

A wise parent thinks his money well spent, if his son does but make at college the common, unavoidable use of well-bred companionship, — acquiring that most precious and uncommon thing, common-sense, current knowledge, the words that pass from lip to lip, the feelings that flow from heart to heart, the manners of good society, even though he acquires but a smattering, the thinnest varnish, of scholastic lore, and no more of mathematical than Horace gained at Athens —

“Scilicet ut possem curvo dignoscere rectum.”

The signal advantage of education at college, where young men of high and of low birth mingle together for some hours daily, is that the keen but not ungenial breeze of ridicule takes the conceit, the nonsense, out of them, — nips their silly egotism, vaporous boastings, maudlin affectations, and shallow pretences in the bud. As President Robinson of Brown University (*experto crede*) said truly a year or two ago, in an address at Phillips Academy, Andover: “None are quicker than students to detect shams; none more prompt to puncture pretence; none more merciless, and, as a rule, none more just in their criticisms; and no criticisms are more wholesome.” A young man who, if he had been educated at home, might have become an insufferable coxcomb, a prig, or a fool, will be bullied,

snubbed, and jeered by his associates at college into a manly, modest, and sensible fellow.

All this was forgotten by James Mill when he tried his grand experiment in private education with that prodigy of precocity, his son, John Stuart. Readers of that son's autobiography will remember that, according to his own opinion of his early training, he was enabled thereby to start with an advantage of a quarter of a century over his contemporaries; but even at the lowest estimate of the march he had stolen upon time, he had at the age of twelve a mental training and equipment equal to that of the most accomplished gentleman whom Oxford or Cambridge could hope to turn out at the age of twenty-two. Indeed, it was but a few years afterwards that a university man, loaded with honors and heralded by a blazing reputation, having been tempted in an evil hour to measure swords with Mill, was run through and through by the youthful Titan, and sank into hopeless obscurity. But as the London "Times," in a paper on Mill, aptly suggested, when time is thus annihilated, and mortal man is privileged to overleap a part of his allotted term, a question arises like that which in the last century so sorely plagued the old women of England on the alteration of the *style*, — What had become, they asked, of the eleven days struck out of the calendar? What had become of the ten years dropped by Mr. Mill in his attempt to leap into manhood before his time? Trained by his father exclusively, separated and secluded from all companions of his own age, and from all common social influences, did he not lose an all-important part of education, without which the rest is often almost valueless, — the education imparted by the clash of minds and the pulling of rival oars, by the measuring of man with man, by

the intercourse of a youth with his fellows? Was he not, in short, a machine-made man, a kind of intellectual Frankenstein of his father's creation?

Of all popular delusions, there is none greater, we believe, than the belief that thinking is better done, that mental growth is greater, in abnormal isolation than in the normal social state of man. The truth is, that intercourse is the best teacher. Our minds need the stimulus of other minds, as our lungs need oxygen to perform their functions. Philosophers tell us that knowledge is precious for its own sake; but experience tells us that knowledge is not knowledge until we use it, — that it is not ours till we have brought it under the dominion of the great social faculty, speech. In the intercourse of young men with each other; in the argumentative walk, or disputatious lounge; in the impact of young thought upon young thought; in the interchange of views, the frequent discussions, the collision of mind with mind, the judgments upon one another, — there is a mental discipline and a knowledge of human nature acquired, which no amount of private study can ever impart. A keen, earnest, animated discussion is to undergraduates what some one has called a kind of mental Oaks or Derby Day, wherein their minds are excited to the utmost speed, and they get over more ground than in weeks of solitary study or mooning meditation.

It is for want of this kind of discipline that self-educated men, so called, are generally so one-sided and so intolerant in argument, — an example of which we have in that “progeny of learning,” as Mrs. Malaprop would call him, the late Mr. Buckle. An omnivorous devourer of books, he had received little tutorial education, and none whatever in other men's society. He had formed his mind almost



exclusively by solitary, unguided study. Though he had swallowed a library, he was not a scholar; many of the books he cited were not first-rate; nor, as a thinker, did he engage in the special investigation of details, but reasoned upon those, often inadequate, gathered by others. And what was the result? Sweeping generalizations and arrogant assertions; "dogmas on every page of his book, and brilliant fallacies in every chapter,"—faults from which, as well as from an intolerant, unsympathizing temper and a magisterial tone implying that all men who differed from him were fools; from a narrowness which blinded him to "the other side" of a question, and led him to call cathedrals "trifles;" from a disposition to exaggerate the importance of physical as contrasted with intellectual and moral agencies,—he would have been saved by an Oxford or Cambridge training.

**"A Little Knowledge."** EVERYBODY is familiar with Pope's aphorism, "A little learning is a dangerous thing." The absurdity of the saying is so evident that it is a wonder that it has gained so general a currency. Mr. Caxton, in Bulwer's admirable novel, happily observes that students and abstract thinkers are too apt, in their early youth, to look at the *depth* of a man's mind or knowledge, and not enough to the surface it may cover. There may be more water in a flowing stream only four feet deep, and certainly more force and health, than in a sullen pool thirty yards to the bottom. The cant about profundity has provoked some biting sarcasm from Macaulay, who says that it never yet has been his fortune to prevail upon any person who pronounces superficial knowledge a curse, and profound knowledge a blessing, to tell him what makes



the standard of profundity. There was a time, ages ago, when the branches of knowledge were so few that it was possible for a man by incessant study to become, in a certain sense, deeply learned; but to-day, when a schoolboy knows more than the sage of those times, profundity in one department involves, of necessity, neglect of many others of which it would be shameful for any person, not a professor, to be ignorant.

Again, if a little knowledge is to be shunned as dangerous, how is one ever to acquire a great deal? Shall one never go into the water till he has learned to swim? It seems to us that if a little knowledge is dangerous, *no* knowledge is more dangerous still. In the latter case, the danger is aggravated with time; whereas the former risk is sure to lessen, as hardly any person makes one acquisition of knowledge without being led by it to make another. A little knowledge of chemistry will enable one to distinguish the salts used in medicine from oxalic acid, with which, mistaking it for them, persons have been poisoned; and a smattering of the same science will teach a farmer whether his land needs animal or mineral dressing. A slight knowledge of botany will enable one to distinguish between cherries and the berries of the deadly nightshade, — the confounding of which has cost many lives. A little knowledge of geology will keep a man from digging for coal, a little knowledge of mineralogy from digging for gold, in formations where it is never found. A little knowledge of antidotes to poison may save a man's life. A little knowledge of law may save a man from financial ruin. An acquaintance with the domestic and medical uses of salt is but a small extent of information; yet it may do much for one's health and happiness. To know that ice swallowed

freely, in small lumps, is a remedy for inflammation of the stomach is comparatively a little thing; but it may enable one to escape a severe illness and even death. It is better to know than to be ignorant that your chance of drawing a twenty thousand-dollar prize in a lottery is hardly greater than that of your being struck by lightning, even though you may not have mastered De Moivre's or Morgan's doctrine of chances. It is well to know the multiplication-table, though you should never scale the dizzy heights of mathematics, where La Place and Newton dwell like stars apart. A little knowledge of biography or of history is better than Bæotian ignorance. It is well to know that Alexander Pope, the author of the contemptuous observation in question, was fond of epigram, and ready at any time to sacrifice truth to a startling paradox or a brilliant antithesis, even though you may not have read all his works or his biography.

The truth is, there is no objection to one's knowing a little about a great many things, provided his knowledge be clear and precise so far as it goes, and provided he is aware *how* little that knowledge is. "Nothing," say the Germans, "is so prolific as a little, known well." He is an intelligent man who is master of what he knows, however little that may be; and the most learned man in the world is not an intelligent man, if his learning has mastered *him*. When the School Board of London was debating whether elementary instruction in science should be given in the schools under their control, it was objected that the scholars would get only a smattering. "Who has more?" asked Sir John Lubbock in reply; "those who are the most advanced in knowledge will be the first to admit how slight that knowledge is." The view of such

men has been compared to that of an American forest, in which the more trees a man cuts down the greater is the expanse of wood he sees around him. But with the great mass of persons the choice is not between what is comparatively profound knowledge and superficial; it is the choice between superficial knowledge and none at all.

Yet though Pope's aphorism is literally false, — as false as the metaphor that follows it, —

“For shallow draughts intoxicate the brain,  
But drinking deeply sobers us again,” —

it may be so interpreted as to convey a truth; a truth of which a happy illustration is given in “Guesses at Truth,” a book full of wisdom, by Archdeacon Hare and his brother: “If you pull up your window a little, it is far likelier to give you cold, rheumatism, or stiff neck than if you throw it wide open; and the chance of any ill consequence becomes still less if you go out into the open air, and let it blow equally upon you from every side. Is it not just the same with knowledge? Do not those exposed to a draught of it blowing on them through a crevice usually grow stiff-necked? When you open the windows of your mind, therefore, open them as widely as you can, and let the soul send forth its messengers to explore the state of the earth.”

Here we have the secret of all one-sidedness, of excessive attachment to *isms*, in a nutshell. The best, the only way to escape the mischiefs that arise from teaching men a little, is to teach them more. Men stumble in the twilight, not because it is half light, but because it is half dark. As Macaulay says of liberty, — the only remedy for the evils of knowledge is *knowledge*. Knowledge, in

short, is the true spear of Achilles: only itself can heal the wounds it has made.

**An "Old Field" Schoolmaster.** THE state of education in many parts of the South before the late war may be judged of by an incident in our experience while travelling on foot in Virginia in 1839. Reaching the inn at Stafford Court House, one evening, where we passed the night, we were introduced to the schoolmaster of the place, who was represented to us by the landlord as "a very learned man." In the course of a conversation with us, he commended to our reading "The Universal History of the World," by Charles Rollin; "the greatest work," said he, "ever issued from the modern press. The account the author gives of the downfall of the Greek and Roman republics beats all the stories I've ever read. It's very affecting, sir; it's *enough to make you wear crape on your arm for thirty days!*" We asked whether he had made the work a text-book in his school. "Oh, no!" said he, "it is too edifying, — too edifying." Here the conversation changed, and some allusion was made by a fellow-traveller to the river Susquehanna. "I know where that river is," said the pedagogue; "it empties into Lake Huron, near the State of Maine!"

**Rufus Choate.** A BOSTON literary friend gave us fifty years ago the following report of an exchange of salutations with this famous lawyer: —

"Quite cool this morning!" remarked our friend to the great New England advocate, one biting cold morning in February, when everybody's nose, cheeks, and ears were tingling with the pinches of Jack Frost.

“Why, yes, Sir,” was the cool, nonchalant reply of the green-bag gentleman; “the climate is not *ab-so-lute-ly* tropical!”

Just six months afterwards, the same persons met again, when the mercury was ranging in the nineties, and everybody felt like a mouse in an exhausted receiver.

“Very warm to-day, Mr. Choate.”

“True, Sir, — one can hardly say that the climate is *pos-i-tive-ly* Arctic!”

**Self-  
Repetition.** In visiting the picture-galleries of Europe a few years ago, we were everywhere struck by the extent to which the “old masters” repeat themselves. Knowing that they can do some one thing better than any other person, they do it over and over again, with few attempts at freshness or novelty. Claude Lorraine has a trick of painting atmospheric effects in a masterly way, and so in almost every picture of his you see the same combination of objects, — a seaport with ships, boats, and classic buildings, and the rays of the setting sun streaming through mist and athwart tremulous waters. If you see the name of either Teniers in a catalogue, you are almost certain that the scene which is to greet your eyes will be a Dutch village festival, with rustics dancing, drinking, or dining in the open air, or a party of boors seated at table, gaming, smoking, and carousing, in a country inn. The most original genius has his favorite formula, his ever-recurring distinctive expression. In Titian it is a crimson cap; in Tintoretto, the lowering face of a Moor; in Rembrandt, deep shadows; in Poussin, the dark purple of a distance; in Hobbema, the dewy lustre of trees. Wherever you see a Ruysdael, you may confidently look for a brook



brawling over rocks, near trees with restless foliage, and under a sky full of wind-driven clouds. Salvator Rosa can portray only wild, rocky, gloomy landscapes, where you expect every moment to see bandits springing out of a ravine or from behind a tree; and if any one invites you to look at a Wouverman, you know infallibly that there will be a troop of horsemen in it, — whether cavalry engaged in a deadly encounter, or a party hunting a stag. Even amid the inexhaustible fruitfulness of Rubens, Sir Joshua Reynolds recognized, it is said, one smooth, flat face continually recurring.

If painters are admired and applauded in spite of this monotonous mannerism, this perpetual imprisonment in self, why should authors be so sharply rated — accused of intellectual exhaustion and poverty — whenever they repeat themselves?

**Petty Trials.**

It is a trite remark that trifles make up the happiness and the misery of human life. There is probably no man who cannot recall occasions when the pettiest vexations have made as exhausting draughts upon his patience and equanimity as troubles and trial of the greatest moment. Even estimated by mere magnitude, the stress of lilliputian trials, harassing us day after day, may be as severe a test of fortitude as one giant trial whose duration and intensity are limited. A shower of needle-arrows, such as those with which Gulliver was assailed in Lilliput, steadily poured in upon a man day by day, would be more galling than an hour's exposure to darts of ordinary size. Collect a thousand burning sticks into a heap, and you have a bonfire which may be seen many miles away. How often it happens that a man who has stood up bravely

against apparently overwhelming misfortunes has been overcome by a series of little vexations, disappointments in the minor affairs of life, just as the ship that has breasted the fiercest storm, or survived the hardest thumps on a reef, is sometimes sunk by tiny insects boring through her timbers!

It is surprising how trivial are the annoyances which suffice to make some men miserable. A lump of soot falling on a man's linen; a beefsteak overdone; losing a railway train by forty seconds, after running himself out of breath; a visit from a bore when he is overwhelmed with cares; the rasping of his nerves by a hand-organ when he is weary, inclined to headache, or trying to sleep; even the want of a pin, or a shirt-button flying off at an unlucky moment, as when he is dressing for a dinner-party and has scant time in which to do it, — all these are annoyances which sorely try a man's patience, and chafe and vex many a person more than a serious misfortune. Alexander Smith goes so far as to say, that, if during thirty years all the annoyances connected with defalcating shirt-buttons alone could be gathered into a mass and endured at once, it would be misery equal to a public execution. Hazlitt tells us, in one of his essays, that he has been disappointed of a hundred-pound job and lost half a crown at rackets on the same day, and been more mortified at the latter than at the former. The same writer tells of two persons playing at backgammon, one of whom was so enraged at losing his match at a particular point of the game that he took the board and threw it out of the window. It fell upon the head of a passenger in the street, who came up and demanded instant satisfaction for the affront and injury he had sustained. The losing gamester, in reply, simply

asked him if he understood backgammon, and being told that he did, said, that if upon seeing the state of the game he did not excuse the extravagance of the speaker's conduct, the latter would give him any other satisfaction he might demand. The backgammon tables were accordingly brought, and the situation of the two contending parties being explained, the gentleman put up his sword and went away perfectly satisfied.

One reason, perhaps, why petty trials are so hard to bear, is a feeling that there is little merit and no dignity in patiently enduring them. It flatters our vanity to confront heroically a great crisis, to do battle with a great temptation, and we summon all our energies for the conflict; but who prides himself on his calm endurance of pin-pricks? Yet it must be remembered that, as an excellent Christian writer has said, "though there is no dignity in the thing achieved, there is great difficulty in the achievement. Character transpires in all circumstances, small as well as great; and if by God's grace character takes a good shape in the minor circumstances of life, it is likely to retain that shape when it is keenly sifted." The man who can command his temper amid the obscure, ever-recurring, and exasperating petty annoyances of life, will rarely fail to be cool and self-possessed amid its grand and more public trials.

**College Degrees.** "SINCE we cannot have fame ourselves," says Montaigne, "let us have our revenge by railing at it." A similar feeling seems to actuate some persons who ridicule college degrees. That these badges of distinction have been, till recently, too lavishly bestowed in this country — so lavishly as to be a very untrustworthy indication of intellectual superiority — must be

acknowledged. The glaring disproportion between the titles worn by some men thus honored and their actual attainments, is apt to suggest to one who knows their mental stature the good-humored chaff of Cicero, when he saw his diminutive son-in-law girt with a gigantic weapon, "Who has tied Dolabella to that sword?" Who has forgotten how Harvard College once cheapened its honors by conferring the degree of Doctor of Laws on Andrew Jackson? John Quincy Adams, an overseer of the college, not only voted against that procedure, but was so indignant when he was outvoted that he refused to be present at the conferring of the degree, saying that he "would not witness the disgrace of his Alma Mater, in conferring her highest literary honor upon a barbarian who could not write a sentence of grammar, and hardly could spell his own name." After the deed was done, the remonstrant used to amuse himself by speaking of "Doctor Andrew Jackson."

So notoriously undeserved have been, in too many cases, the honors conferred by our colleges, that some men have shunned as earnestly as others have sought them. Judge Peters is authority for the statement that after Lafayette had been made a Doctor of Laws by one of our colleges, Baron Steuben was in deadly fear lest he should meet with a similar mishap. Having to pass with his troop through a college town, where the Marquis had been thus distinguished, the old warrior halted his men, and thus addressed them: "You shall spur de horse vel, and ride troo de town like de mischief, for, if dey catch you, dey make one doctor of you." The tough old soldier had no more respect for such a distinction than his countryman, the great musical composer Handel, who refused to accept the degree of Doctor of Music from Oxford. "Vat, trow my money away for



dat, — *de blockhead's vish!* I no vant to be von Doctor." There is a story of the days when college honors were scattered broadcast over the land, that an illiterate rich man, having been honored with a degree by a college which he had laid under obligation, made a wager that he could obtain a similar honor for his servant. Winning the wager, he was so flushed with success that he laid another wager that he could obtain a degree for his horse. But that he lost; for the president wrote him a courteous note, saying that though they were very anxious to oblige so good a friend of the college, and though he had found, on examination of its records, that they had once conferred a degree on a jackass (naming the date of the gentleman's own diploma), they could really find no precedent for complying with his last request.

Within the last twenty-five years there has been a very marked improvement in this matter, and it can no longer be justly asserted — as was asserted some fifty or sixty years ago by Rev. Dr. S. H. Cox, of New York, in his sarcasms on what he styled "this semilunar fardel" — that the honorary degrees conferred by American colleges are "no test of competency," and that "talents are scarcely a recommendation for them, ignorance seldom a protection, juvenility itself no disqualification." Our colleges — at least the leading ones, and many of secondary grade — are growing more and more chary of their honors; and Father Taylor, the seamen's preacher, if living to-day, and asked why he had not been *doctored*, would hardly reply, as he once did to this question, "I suppose it is because my divinity has never been sick."

It must be a delicate question, in some cases, for a clergyman to decide whether to accept the honor of a doctorate.



The minister who covets and courts such a mark of distinction seems hardly to obey his Master's command: "Be ye not called Rabbi;" but to scorn or decline accepting such titles when bestowed unsought — and, especially, to do so in a way to attract attention — is often to betray as much vanity as that which prompts other men to parade them. It looks a little too much like trying to fill out a quartette of greatness with Moses Stuart, Albert Barnes, and Henry Ward Beecher. The affected humility of some such persons reminds one of the saying of Alexander the Great when some in his hearing praised Antipater, because he wore black while his colleagues wore purple: "Yes, but Antipater is all purple within." It must be confessed that the virtue of some persons is unpleasantly ferocious. When Pope Alexander VI., in order to silence Savonarola, offered him the Archbishopric of Florence, with the prospect of a cardinal's hat, the monk was, no doubt, sincerely indignant; but there was a shade of vainglory in his reply, thundered forth from the pulpit: "I will have no hat but that of the martyr, red with my own blood!" What could be more ridiculous than the flourish of trumpets with which the apostle of utility, Jeremy Bentham, refused the diamond ring sent to him by the Czar of Russia, pompously declaring that it was not his mission to receive diamond rings from emperors, but to teach nations the lessons of wisdom?

Perhaps there would be no harm in a clergyman's receiving the degree of D.D., if, as some one has suggested, he would remember that there are at least some scores of men who have forgotten more than he ever knew or ever will know, who yet will never receive a degree. A very sensible course for a sensitive or conscientious clergyman to pursue,

is that taken by Rev. R. F. Horton, of London, Eng., who recently lectured at Yale University on Preaching; he said that while he did not see his way clear, without giving offence, to refuse the degrees that had been conferred on him, he hoped his congregation would address him as formerly. As to the actual value of college and all other titles of distinction, it is equally foolish to overestimate and to despise them. What Bacon finely says of nobility hits the happy medium on this subject as well: *Nobilitatem nemo contemnit, nisi cui abest; nemo jactitat, nisi cui nihil aliud est quo gloriatur*, — “No one contemns nobility but he who lacks it; no one boasts of it but he who has nothing else to brag of.”

**The Society of Women.** SOME one has said that “of all the means of recruiting the exhausted energies of the mind after the toils and vexations of the day, none is so admirably fitted to fill up the elegant leisure of the scholar as the society of woman.” The observation is true. Conversation with men demands some exertion, exacts some labor; it is too often a theatre in which the parties strive to outdo each other in argument, or to mortify their unread hearers by showing the depth of their knowledge and the acuteness or grasp of their minds. Even when free from all rivalry and contention, it is in many cases a mutual and incessant straining to say things which have an epigrammatic point and pungency, which are flavored with the salt of wit, — startle by their abruptness, or give a pleasant shock of surprise. Conversation thus conducted, instead of soothing the ruffled mind, only tasks anew the faculties that have toiled all the day long in the world’s mill.

In the society of women there is nothing of all this.

Nature has established a spirit of mutual concession between the sexes which forbids all contention; while that delicate tact which discovers instinctively the tastes and habits of thought of another, and adapts itself to them, which slides gracefully over matters without dwelling upon them and without effort, extracts the delicate aroma and the volatile essence, and gives — as Dr. Donne said of Lady Anne Clifford — to every subject, “from predestination to slea silk,” a pungent flavor and a piquant relish, is rarely found but in the society of intelligent and accomplished women.

**Overworked Women.** THE “Autocrat of the Breakfast Table” expresses the opinion that an overworked woman is always a sad sight, — sadder far than that of an overworked man, because she is so much more fertile in capacities for suffering than a man. Besides her neuralgias and her backaches and her fits of depression, there are all the varieties of headache, — “sometimes as if Jael were driving the nail that killed Sisera into her temples; sometimes letting her work with half her brain, while the other half throbs as if it would go to pieces; sometimes tightening round the brows, as if the cap-band were Luke’s iron crown.” But sadder far to our minds than all this misery, exquisite as it is, is the necessity to which woman is so often subjected of brooding day and night over the tormenting problem of “how to make both ends meet,” by perpetual pinching and self-denial, and by the thousand shifts and devices for sustaining life on the smallest possible expenditure. The continual pressure of these small cares and anxieties exhausts as much as great ones; and they have this added bitterness, that they are petty and humiliating.

It flatters our vanity to demean ourselves well in a great crisis; the heroic string in our nature is touched, and we brace ourselves up for the trial; but there is no dignity or honor in bearing up under a succession of mean and paltry vexations.

Juvenal says truly, that poverty has no sharper sting than that it makes its victim ridiculous; and ridiculous does woman become, even to herself, when she is doomed by a limited income perpetually to think of sordid little economies, — of petty savings which become imperative when every meal, every dress, every ride, every recreation, is a battlefield of ingenuity and self-denial against ever-menacing debt and difficulty. “He who drinks beer, thinks beer,” said Dr. Johnson; and it is equally true that those persons who occupy themselves with endless cares for small savings get to think candle-ends for their reward. It is pitiful to think of the deterioration of mind and feeling, the loss of dignity and self-respect, which is almost sure to accompany the constant practice of beating down prices and screwing cents and nickels from expense-bills. Some of Eve’s descendants, women of rare mind and heart, no doubt escape this result; but the mass inevitably suffer. Among men, the evil of *res angustæ domi* is generally antagonized by vigorous efforts to earn, rather than to save; “it is but mounting a thousand additional steps,” said Dr. Arbuthnot, when all his savings were swept away by the South Sea scheme. But “upon women,” — as one of the most thoughtful ones of our day has said, — “to whom so few honest fields of industry are open, the necessity for a perpetual guard against the smallest freedom of expense falls with all its cruel and soul-crushing weight; and on the faces of thousands of them may be read the sad



story of youthful enthusiasm all nipped by pitiful cares, anxieties, and meannesses, perhaps the most foreign of all sentiments to their naturally liberal and generous hearts."

**Big Houses.** WHEN one reads of the big houses which the Cræsus of our day are building in town and country, he cannot help recalling the words of Plutarch concerning the Rhodians. "They built their houses," he says, "as if they were to be immortal;" and then adds the words that seem irresistibly to follow, — "and furnished their souls as if they were but for a day." When fabulous sums are spent for the outer, sensuous life, the inner, spiritual life is apt to be starved. Of course, the fact that a man expends millions on his house, furniture, horses and carriages, dress and display, is not conclusive proof that he gives little time to the culture of his mind and heart; but we fear that to many such persons the retort of Ben Jonson to the vain king who jested upon the humbleness of his dwelling — the ornaments of which were the "rare" old dramatist himself, the best minds of the age, and "plain living and high thinking" — is but too evidently applicable: "Tell his majesty that his soul lives in an alley."

Strange, that in this age of "advanced ideas" and wide-spread "culture," when we plume ourselves so much upon our superiority to the men of bygone ages, we should need to listen to the admonition of a pagan philosopher of nearly nineteen hundred years ago. "You will confer the greatest benefit on your city," said the Phrygian Stoic, Epictetus, "not by raising its roofs, but by exalting its souls; for it is better that great souls should live in small habitations than that abject slaves should burrow in great houses."



**Newspaper Rivalry.** THE passion in the soul of an editor for special, exclusive news is, as all the world knows, intense and all-absorbing. Life to him is a drama or a farce with little interest, except for the "paragraphs" it may furnish. Disasters — the more appalling the better — are godsend; shipwrecks are runs of luck; cyclones (paradoxical as it may seem) are windfalls; thefts, embezzlements, and bankruptcies are "grist to his mill;" a murder is like rain in the drought season; revolutions are fortunes. Especially is this true to-day, when the rivalry of daily newspapers is so fierce, unmatched in intensity by the competition in any other calling. Watch the necrological news-hunter of a great daily, when the life of an eminent invalid, whose "impromptu" biography he has had pigeon-holed for many weeks, is prolonged beyond all reasonable expectation. How unhappy the poor scribbler looks! What disappointment elongates his lugubrious visage! He feels aggrieved, almost insulted. But let him hear of the great man's decease, and how his eyes sparkle, how elastic his step, how jubilant his voice, attitude, and demeanor! Signor Penseroso is transformed into Signor Allegro in a twinkling.

There is a story of a provincial editor in England, who, discovering that one of his neighbors had hanged himself, would not cut him down, or mention the discovery to any one, but kept the body under lock and key for two entire days. Does this seem to you heartless, reader? To him the reason was simple and sufficient. His paper appeared on Thursday, his rival's on Wednesday; and "do you think," he triumphantly asked, "that I was going to say anything about the suicide, and let that scoundrel have the paragraph?"

The foregoing example of newspaper enterprise may startle the reader; but, unique as it is, it has been surpassed, as might be expected, in this fast country. The following story of American reportorial shrewdness and activity — which, like love, “laugh at locksmiths,” and which, as Horace says of gold, “delight to penetrate through the midst of guards, and to break through stone walls, more potent than the thunderbolt” — was told some years ago in the Correspondents’ Club at Washington: —

At the funeral of General Baker, which was held at the White House, the correspondent of a New York journal, unable to get a ticket of admission, got down through a coal-hole, and, after groping about for some time, reached the East Room at last, directly in the rear of the officiating clergyman. While the latter was engaged in prayer, the reporter observed a roll of paper in his hat. To seize it and fly was the work of a moment. When the unfortunate preacher turned to find his sermon, he found it not. He attempted to deliver it from memory, but made a mortifying failure, much to the astonishment of the dignitaries addressed. The next morning he had the satisfaction of reading his *oraison funèbre* in the New York “Herald.”

“Smart”

Boys.

WHAT is more offensive than an excessively “smart” boy? Even downright dullness, which, if it never startles you by its wit, never pesters you with its impertinence, is preferable to the excessive precocity of these pert, saucy, prematurely wise youths, who know more at twelve or fifteen than their fathers or grandfathers did at sixty. Miss Florence Marryatt, who visited this country in 1884, met with a youngster of this stamp — a boy of eight or nine years — on board of the steamship

“Germanic.” He was one day on deck handling the quoits, when the skipper, in passing, observed kindly: “That’s not the way to handle a quoit, my boy.” The little wretch looked up and said: “Look here, old man, are you bossing this game, or am I?”

**Contradictions in Character.** It is a truism to say that it requires the highest acuteness and the largest acquaintance with men to read character correctly. Gall and Spurzheim, indeed, profess to make, comparatively speaking, child’s play of it; but, in spite of their carefully mapped “organs” and their “temperaments,” they have failed to provide us with an anthropometer: man continues to be a puzzle and a mystery to his fellow-man, as baffling as any riddle of the Egyptian Sphinx. One cause of the difficulty is the inexplicable contradictions that are so often found in the same individual. Even when we have discovered the ruling passion, we have not always obtained a key to all the chambers and secret closets of the soul. In nothing is Shakespeare’s profound insight more strikingly shown than in his knowledge of the infinite complexity of human nature. While all his leading characters have some primary, overmastering passion, a close study of them discloses a thousand other qualities, the mutual play and varying intensity of which go to make up the complex being that the poet has portrayed in Shylock, Falstaff, Timon, or Macbeth.

The moral incongruities of men are, indeed, endless. Who, for instance, would suppose that a musical composer, — and that, too, of sacred music, — of the very highest order of intellect, could be a profane man, miserly, and in one respect grossly sensual? Yet such, we are

told, was the author of that sublimest of oratorios, "The Messiah," — whom an English admirer describes as a large, tall, heavy man, with clumsy hands and feet, sauntering about (in London) with an awkward "rocking motion," talking English in the most grotesquely uncouth of German accents and with the sublimest contempt for grammar and construction, and swearing heartily "a good mouth-filling oath" at any one or anything that did not please him. At his meals he appears to have been a perfect Justice Greedy, — a second caliph Soliman, or what Horace calls a *perniciēs et tempestas barathrumque macelli*, who gorged himself like an anaconda. No stranger who looked at him as he was cramming his skin with creature comforts would have believed that he was the author of the heavenly strains of which he was so prodigal. It is said that he used to order his dinner at an inn for two persons; and when it was ready, and the waiter asked when the company would arrive, he was answered by Handel in a voice of thunder, "I am de company! Pring de dinner, prestissimo!" For fear of not getting enough when he was invited to dine out, he took care to make an enormous repast before he went; and in the course of one of these antepasts he devoured a couple of chickens, half-a-dozen mackerel, and a good part of a duck, yet two hours afterward went to complete his dinner at a nobleman's! In apology for this it was urged (and we hope with truth) that probably, as in Goethe's case, who had also an abnormal appetite, Handel's large physique and generally rude health made it natural to him to eat more largely than average men.

Of his miserly disposition, an illustration is the peculiarity that he would wear a shirt a month without change to save the cost of washing, — and that at a time when he was receiving £50 a night for his musical compositions!



A German by birth, an Italian by sympathy and training, an Englishman by residence and conformity, Handel belonged to no school, yet had a style as unmistakably his own as had Dante in verse, Angelo in sculpture, or Raphael in painting. Strong, egotistic, self-willed, the great composer was generally cheerful and good-tempered, but violent when irritated, and indomitably proud and independent. One who knew him well relates that when he was pleased with the way the music was going at one of his concerts, his enormous wig had always a certain nod or vibration, and that at the Carlton House concerts he would swear angrily if the ladies in waiting talked during the music, — upon which the Princess would check them, saying, “Hush! hush! Handel is angry.” He did not hesitate even to scold the Prince of Wales for being late at a concert and “keeping all these poor people [the performers] so long from their scholars and other concerns.” His dealings with refractory singers were summary indeed. When Cuzzoni, the famous vocalist, insolently refused to sing, at a rehearsal of the opera of “Otho,” the beautiful air “Falsa Imagine,” Handel was instantly enraged, and cried out, —

“Vat! you vill not sing my mooshic? I vill trow you out de vindow, if you vill not sing te mooshic.”

“You sal not vex me, Mr. Handel! I vill raise de dev-vel ven I sal be vex!” replied the songstress.

“You are te tevil,” rejoined Handel; “but, madam, I am Beelzebub, te prince of te tevils! and,” seizing her by the waist, “I vill trow you out te vindow, if you vill not sing te mooshic!”

Hardly less autocratic was this Napoleon of composers with one of his poets. To the complaint that Handel’s



music did not suit the words the poet had written, the former replied with Spartan brevity, "Den de worts is bat!"

Hardly less paradoxical than that of this Shakespeare of the musical art, was the character of that universal genius, Leonardo da Vinci. The accounts given of the multiplied facets of this astonishing intelligence — so great in art, yet relatively less artist than physiologist, inventor, engineer, and mathematician — almost defy belief. "The disciple of practice," as he called himself, seeing and observing everything, — the fall of the wave, the motion of the bird, the duration of the echo, the veins of the leaf, the scintillations of the stars, the conditions of the moon, etc., — inventing everything, such as over thirty kinds of mills, windlasses, cranes, saws, drills, looms; machines for plate-rolling, wire-drawing, file-cutting; instruments for flattening and dressing cloth; a surgeon's probe, a universal joint, a spring to close doors, cowls for smoky chimneys, an artist's camp-stool, a roasting-jack moved by the hot air, the common wheelbarrow, and even a scheme for lifting the baptistery of Florence to a higher level, — he reminds one, by the force and flexibility of his intellect, of the elephant's trunk, which with equal facility can rend an oak or pick up a pin. Yet this many-sided and marvellous genius, though he lived in the days of Columbus and Savonarola, took no interest in the world around him, and to all appearance was utterly indifferent to moral truth. Breathing contentedly the atmosphere of the cowardly and profligate usurper Ludovico Sforza's court, he welcomed with him the packs of French wolves under Charles VIII., who first overran the plains of Italy, and, on Ludovico's fall, built with equal readi-

ness triumphal arches for the entry of Louis XII. into Milan.

Broad as was the sweep of Da Vinci's vision, wide as was the range of his surpassing intellectual gifts, the extremes observable in his character were equally strange and rare. In his art, says one of his most intelligent critics, " he reaches from the subtlest and sweetest beauty to the most unnatural and hideous deformity : in his writings, from the grandest generalities to the most puerile particulars : in his daily habits, from the profoundest studies and application to (we are assured) the vainest extravagance and ostentation ; from the clearest methods of reasoning and closest accuracy of observation as regards cause and effect, to all the sure consequences of reckless expenditure, disorder, and social degradation, — debts, fawnings, unpaid salary, and humiliating beggings, even for clothes : in his life, from the illustrious philosopher who commands the wonder and admiration of all subsequent ages, to the hireling who knew not the meaning of the word ' patriot ; ' who shifted with every wind of fortune, executed *chefs-d'œuvre* or invented toys equally to flatter the French invader or the Milanese usurper ; who placed himself, like the mercenary troops of the time, at the disposal of whomsoever happened to be in power, no matter how obtained, and principally served two of the most iniquitous princes of the age, Ludovico Sforza and Cæsar Borgia."

**Genius and Application.** AN English reviewer, speaking of Arthur Clough, observes that " he was one of the prospectuses which never become works ; one of that class whose unwritten poems, undemonstrated discoveries, or un-

tested powers, are certain to carry everything before them when they appear, — *only, they never do appear.*” How full the world always is of such foiled potentialities, “mute, inglorious Miltons,” who are always very “promising” because they never do more than promise! The late E. P. Whipple, in one of his brilliant essays, finely ridicules the eulogists of these subjunctive heroes of literature, art, or science, who might, could, would, or should achieve great things, but whose persistence in not doing great things nobody can understand. These panegyrists will point to some lazy gentleman, — the prodigy, perhaps, of a country village, — and tell you that there is a protuberance on his forehead or temple large enough to produce a Hamlet or a Principia if he only had an active temperament. “But,” says Mr. Whipple, “the thing which produces Hamlets and Principias is not physical temperament, but spiritual power.” It is a principle which admits of few exceptions, that what men *can* do they *will* do; and if they fail to do it, it is because they are conscious of their inability. When a man appears to have great gifts, and yet accomplishes nothing, it is because he has no aptitude for any particular thing; no consciousness of ability to push anything, through all obstacles and discouragements, to a conclusion; in short, no potent will to attempt it. What a man *does* is the only true test of what a man *is*; and to declare that he has great capacity, but nothing to set his great capacity in motion, is like saying how powerful a man would be if he only had great strength, or how swiftly a steamship would cross the Atlantic if she only had a bigger boiler and could move her propeller fast enough.

Akin to this absurdity is that of deploring as a fault in a man of genius his want of equanimity and constancy, of

steady, dogged, unremitting application : men speak of it as a misfortune which he himself could remedy, as a matter wholly within his own control. But while we believe that genius *will* work, at its own appointed times and seasons ; that nine-tenths of what men call genius is only a prodigious capacity for hard work, and only the other tenth is the ability to do great things without hard work ; that the disposition to intellectual labor is, in fact, just in proportion to the size and vitality of the thinking principle, — we yet do not believe that it will work regularly by square, rule, and compass, and at certain fixed hours, after the pattern of plodding mediocrity. That scorn of mathematical rules, that hatred of the shackles of regular systems of application, that intolerance of uniform thought and resentment of the mind against continuous toil, which we so often deprecate in men of genius, springs from the very sensitiveness of constitution which makes genius what it is. It is the natural compensation by which great things tend to an equalization with little ones.

Sir William Temple felicitously says that the abilities of man must fall short on one side or the other, like too scanty a blanket when you are abed : if you pull it upon your shoulders, you leave your feet bare ; if you thrust it down upon your feet, your shoulders are uncovered. In other words, all desirable intellectual qualities are not to be found in any one character ; but as surely as we find a large degree of one quality, we must look for a deficiency of some other. He therefore, who, looking upon a wayward and unsteady genius like a Marlowe, a Coleridge, or a Poe, exclaims, “ What great things he would have done, had he but been regular and methodical ! ” is hardly wiser than he who, contemplating a dull, painstaking drudge, should say,



“How rare a creature this had been, had he only been endowed with genius!” Nature, which has ordained that the fleet greyhound shall have no scent, that the bird of paradise shall have ugly legs and the peacock a discordant voice, is too frugal of her mental gifts to heap together all kinds of shining qualities in one glowing mass. At long intervals of time — once in a century or two — she suffers the world to be dazzled by that phoenix, a man who unites the mental and moral powers, the intellectual and the spiritual thews, of greatness; and then we recognize the giant in literature, art, or science, the idol of a nation, — a Dante, a Newton, or a Bacon.

**Old English Lyrics.** READER, have you a taste for song, — rich, full-throated song, in which music is “married to immortal verse”? Then get a copy of Mr. A. H. Bullen’s “Lyrics from the Song-Books of the Elizabethan Age,” published last year by J. C. Nimmo, London; feast upon the “nectared sweets” of the volume, and thank us for calling your attention to it. How many exquisite gems of song, long forgotten, has the editor here exhumed from the dust of three centuries! How dull, spiritless, and lackadaisical, compared with them, are most of the songs that one hears in drawing-rooms to-day! To our own mind, this book is one of the best pieces of work done by a literary resurrectionist since the days of Bishop Percy. What a witchery there is in some of Campion’s songs, and how is divine music wedded to still diviner poesy in the charming lyrics of Dowland, Byrd, and Robert Jones! What a fine piece of fooling is “The frog’s wooing of the crab,” by an unknown lyrist; and how Vautor, by his address to the owl, — “Sweet Suffolk owl, so trimly dight,” —



“Takes the wondering ear,  
And lays it up in willing prisonment!”

Why are no such songs written to-day? Is it because the genius and sentiment requisite for such productions are wanting, or is it not rather because the *œrugo et cura peculi* of the age, and still more its din and tumult, its restlessness, impatience, and hurry, are fatal to lyric excellence? The lyrists of to-day are inferior to those of Elizabeth's time, not so much from lack of fancy or passion, as from impatience, — an unwillingness to wait until from a brooding half-idleness, poetic fancies arise in the mind like a gentle mist from a lake, delicately and of themselves, instead of being the product of “high pressure.”

**Illusions.** “TRUST thy heart,” says Longfellow, “and what the world calls illusions.” A happy sentiment! Happy, thrice happy — *felices ter et amplius* — they who believe with a depth of conviction which no disappointments can disturb in the goodness, honor, and truthfulness of their fellow-men; and wretched, inexpressibly wretched, is the man who sees a counterfeit in every coin, a thorn in every bunch of roses, a fly in every pot of ointment, and a hypocrite in every Christian.

A sad word is that by which the French denote such a person, — *désillusionné*; one who has outlived all his youthful ideals; who has been behind the scenes of the theatre, and has seen the coarse pulleys, dirty ropes, and bare walls without the light and the paint, and has watched the ugly actors and gaunt actresses by daylight. Dreary and grim is the life of such a man; Dead Sea apples are his joys, and sadder than Styx or “dark Cocytus” runs the river of life to him between its stony banks! How mourn-

fully expressive of that early loss of hope and belief, and of the birth of that consciousness of evil which once profoundly felt rarely deserts the soul, are the following lines which Walter Savage Landor in one of his "Imaginary Conversations" puts into the mouth of Spenser: —

"How much is lost when neither heart nor eye  
 Rose-winged Desire or fabling Hope deceives;  
 When boyhood with quick throb hath ceased to spy  
 The dubious apple in the yellow leaves;

"When rising from the turf where youth reposed,  
 We find but deserts in the far-sought shore;  
 When the huge book of Fairy-land has closed,  
 And those strong brazen clasps will yield no more!"

**Riches vs. Poverty.** How eager to day is the pursuit of riches; what sacrifices of health, leisure, culture, happiness, and even honor and conscience, are men ready to make for them, — and yet how unenviable is their possessor's condition compared with that of him who "having nothing, yet hath all"! Did you ever think, reader, when you were envying the rich man, of the cares and anxieties that tease and torment him, from which his neighbor, "with purse oftenest in the flaccid state, imponderous, which will not fling against the wind," is wholly free? "I have a rich neighbor," says Izaak Walton, "who is always so busy that he has no leisure to laugh: the whole business of his life is to get money, and more money, that he may still get more and more money." The impecunious man, on the other hand, snaps his fingers at care, because he has nothing to worry about or to disturb his repose. No creditor or tax-collector pesters him with bills; no poor relation dogs him like a shadow, teasing him with calls for help. He escapes the whole swarm of "suckers,"

“diddlers,” and parasites, and neither the beggar nor the charitable-subscription solicitor ever knocks at his door. No hideous dreams of stocks falling, or banks bursting, or notes payable on the morrow, ever disturb his nightly slumbers. Of “Atchison” and “C. B. and Q.,” of “bulls” and “bears,” he is blissfully ignorant; and rumors of failing Lombard or Winner Investment Companies, defaulting treasurers, and runaway cashiers, of watered stocks and over-issued bonds, send not a spasm through his anatomy. No dread of footpads or pick-pockets, of slung-shots or revolvers, haunts his mind as he perambulates the lonely road or dimly-lighted street at midnight; nor does the alarum of the fire-bell send an electric thrill through his frame, as it does through that of him who has costly dwellings or well-stocked warehouses to be burned. Devoid alike of cash and its equivalents, he has no fear of duns; the ringing of the door-bell falls not a knell on his heart; a footstep on the staircase does not make him quake with apprehension. At the rap on his door, he can crow forth, “Come in!” and his pulse beat healthfully, his heart sink not into his bowels. The law, with its fearful array of attachments, replevins, executions, and imprisonments, has no terrors for him; for *fi. fa.* and *ca. sa.* he has a profound contempt, and puzzleth not his brain with their distinction. Having nothing upon which it can fix its grasp, he has run under the guns of the law, and its thunders roll innocuous over his head. The sheriff, with attorney’s orders, may beat his door, but what careth he? Blessed with an empty purse, he smiles at the command to appear in court, and laughs to scorn the threat of a jail. No days of precious time wasted in settling long, tedious accounts with those he owes; no angry disputes

about the amount of his bill: the creditor has but to learn his impecuniosity, when he recognizes the hopelessness of his claim, and blots the account from his ledger. In short, it is hardly more true that "Heaven tempers the wind to the shorn lamb," than that it provides a vast feather-bed at the foot of fortune's ladder for those who have tumbled from its slippery rounds.

Such are some of the blessings of the moneyless man. On the other hand, to be rich — what is it? It is to be a *poor* rich man, instead of a *rich* poor man. It is to work like a galley-slave to take care of your riches, and in return get only your board and clothes. It is to be taxed for not only the property you possess, but for your income besides, and, perhaps, to be suspected of falsehood in stating the amounts. It is to have your name on every subscription list, yet get no credit for it, because you "might easily have given more." It is to be pestered with duns, yet to excite unmixed astonishment by asking for payment of a debt due to yourself. It is to find it for the interest of your debtors not to pay the principal, and for their principle not to pay the interest. It is to be called an aristocrat if you wear finer clothes than other men, and a niggard if you do not. It is to be preyed on by sharpers, and get no sympathy when fleeced. It is to have every bankrupt, burnt-out, and thriftless man make a run upon the bank of your benevolence, and then curse you in his heart for the smallness of the dividend. It is to be married for your money, or to have a wife perpetually casting in your teeth the dollars she brought you. It is to have Addition of dollars, Subtraction of comforts, and Multiplication of anxieties, end in lawsuits over your will, or in Division among spend-thrift heirs or ungrateful legatees. It is, finally, to en-



counter more miseries and vexations in this world than other men, and, at last, to find admittance to a better more difficult than it is to the rest of mankind.

**Risibility** It is well known that the essence of humor  
**Amid Pain.** is incongruity, the conjunction of things that are opposite or dissonant, — as the mingling of manliness and gullibility in Fielding's Parson Adams, of honesty and knavery in Gil Blas, or of shrewdness and stupidity in Sancho Panza. The most laughable of incongruities is that which arises from the clash of dignity and meanness, eminence and vulgarity, the solemn and the comic. The sense of the comic is sometimes enhanced by suffering. When the soul is filled with gloom, a ludicrous incident becomes the more ludicrous by contrast. An Englishman who poisoned himself by mistake told one of his friends, that, when suffering agonies, he was deeply conscious of the grimly ludicrous aspects under which one circumstance succeeded another. The exquisite irony of the contrast between his own internal sensations and the sunny indifference or stolid surprise of all around him, while he was in a galloping haste to escape death, made an impression upon him which rose above the pain, — as, for instance, when his porter asked for leave to change his shoes before he went for the doctor. Irresistible also was the bland and magnificent phrase in which the doctor, when found, inquired, "what might be the matter," and the cajoling smile and endearing question, after the administration of a monster emetic, whether "he did not feel a little sick yet."

Similar to this was the experience of a friend of mine, a Chicago lady, who was taken suddenly and violently ill,



and was thought to be dying. A sister from New York — Mrs. C., a fashionable Fifth Avenue lady — was visiting her at the time; and nothing, she afterward told me, could be more exquisitely ludicrous than Mrs. C.'s mingled groans and directions to the servants, which, though the sufferer was racked with pain and felt that her last hour had come, tickled her risibilities to a degree rarely experienced in health. "Run for the doctor!" cried Mrs. C. "Here, Biddy, quick, — clear up the room! Oh, my poor, dear, dear sister! — put away these things! set the chairs in order! Oh, dear, oh, dear! what if any of the neighbors should come in and see the room all in disorder! Oh, my poor, dear, dear sister! she is dying, I know!" The distress of the good woman about the disorder of the room in the very moments when she was deploring her sister's pains and probable decease must, indeed, have been comic enough "to move wild laughter in the throat of death."

**Gibbon, the** I HAVE just had a long feast of historical  
**Historian.** reading. I have read — need I say with what absorption of the mind and never-flagging interest? — Gibbon's "Decline and Fall," Arnold's History of Rome, Rawlinson's of Phœnicia, Guizot's of France, Fyffe's of Modern Europe, — in all, twenty-five stout octavo volumes, of which the first has proved the most fascinating and profitable. What a masterpiece of genius and labor it is! How wonderful that such a monumental work, bridging the gulf between the old world and the new, should have come, not from an academy of scholars, but from the brain and hand of a single man, — and that man the big-headed, little-limbed, double-chinned, button-mouthed, daintily-dressed, fastidious, smirking, snuff-box-

tapping man whom we see in the portraits and other pictures of Gibbon that have come down to us! With what a mastery has he brought all his vast and incongruous material, gathered from the whole range of classical, Byzantine, mediæval, and Oriental literature, into one consistent and luminous tableau! What weight, majesty, and splendor in his style, in spite of its occasional metallic ring, its grandiloquence here and there which slides into pomposity, its lack of terseness, suppleness, ease, and delicate *nuances*! Emerson has pardonably exaggerated in declaring the reading of the "Decline and Fall" to be an education in itself. That this encyclopædic history of thirteen hundred years should ever be displaced, Mr. Freeman regards as impossible.

Scores of books, pamphlets, and reviews have been written, exposing Gibbon's errors in his two chapters on the early spread of Christianity; but as Paley pithily said of these covert misrepresentations, "Who can refute a sneer?" The great defect of the historian was moral: he lacked moral elevation, nobility of sentiment, loftiness of soul. Admire as we must the extraordinary flexibility, subtlety, and penetration of his intellect; the fulness and accuracy of his knowledge; the skill with which he analyzes and marshals the most complicated parts of his subject, — yet we cannot help feeling that he was of a frigid temperament, and never flushed with enthusiasm for a good cause. As Sainte-Beuve finely says, he never collects his materials at a startling point of view, and with a burst of genius. "He is more intelligent than elevated. . . . If a great revolution were anywhere to occur in the human mind, he would not feel it; he would not announce it by lighting a beacon on the top of his tower, or by ringing the

silver bell." In short, a true child of the lukewarm, sceptical eighteenth century, the great historian was of the earth, earthy, and simply mirrored the moral spirit of his time.

**A Rabble-  
Charming  
Word.**

WHAT strange ideas many persons have of liberty! What an amount of mischief has been done to society by such "rabble-charming words," as South calls them, — words "which have so much wildfire wrapped up in them," — as liberty, equality, and fraternity! How many who "bawl for freedom" confound it with license! A republic presupposes a high state of morals; but how can this be possible without the habit of subordination and respect, and how can these exist without humility? The true freeman is not only jealous of his own rights, but respects and cares for the rights of others, and is indignant when any man, even the meanest, is wronged or trampled under foot. The man who is always boasting of his freedom is probably a slave to the meanest and most tyrannical vices, passions, or prejudices.

Apropos to this, in 1881 I made the acquaintance in Munich, Bavaria, of a very intelligent German lady, who told me a very suggestive anecdote. At a pension in Switzerland she met a Yankee, who one day at the dinner-table boasted that the United States was the freest country on the globe. "Why," said he, pulling a revolver from his trousers pocket, and brandishing it before the company, "with *that* in my hand, I can travel in perfect safety from one end of the United States to the other!"

**Skinflints.** Is there a sublime of meanness? We think there is. One of the most extraordinary ex-

amples of this trait that we have known, was the sharp practice many years ago of a bookseller in Maine, who, in making change, paid a customer his due dime and a half, then took them back and substituted a Spanish ninepence ( $12\frac{1}{2}$  cents) and two cents, saying: "There, take that; *I've a right to save half a cent when I can.*" This is certainly the *triple extrait*, the concentrated distillation or quintessence of meanness, and approaches the sublime! Perhaps the celebrated English chief-justice, Lord Kenyon, may have paralleled it, of whom Lord Ellenborough said, when asked for an explanation of the grammatical error in the inscription on his tomb in Westminster Abbey, *Mors janua vita* (instead of *vitæ*): "Don't you know that that was Kenyon's express desire, as he left it in his will that they should not go to the expense of a diphthong?"

I have heard of a man who, when he was travelling in his private carriage, carried oats in it to feed his horse at the country inns, and also a hen to eat up the scattering oats and lay an egg for his dinner. But even he was an incarnation of liberality compared with a miser who lived in Europe some years ago, and who, from fear of coming to want, hanged himself, but was discovered and cut down in time to save his life. Recovering his consciousness, and seeing the rope cut in two, he exclaimed: "Why spoil a new rope by cutting it? *Could n't you have untied it?*"

**A Social Nuisance.** OF all the disagreeable persons in society few try one's patience more severely than loud-mouthed persons, — those who think that to be emphatic, they must address you in tones of thunder. There are persons who, apparently, are not content with making an observation tell upon your mind, unless it tells upon your



nerves also. They drive the words through the conversation like wedges; and when they raise their voices, you feel a tingling at your fingers' ends like that on touching a galvanic wire. When such persons have a controversial turn of mind, the misery they inflict is exquisite. The gentle, sensitive Cowper must have suffered keenly from these social pests: —

“Vociferated logic kills me quite;  
A noisy man is always in the right.  
I twirl my thumbs, fall back into my chair,  
Fix on the wainscoat a distressful stare,  
And when I think his blunders are all out,  
Reply discreetly, ‘To be sure, — no doubt!’”

**“Going with the Grain.”** A GREAT many essays have been written on the art of living with others; but the whole philosophy of the subject may be condensed into four little words: “Go with the grain.” This rule holds good equally of quadruped and biped. Stroke a cat against the direction of her hair, and she crooks up her back indignantly: you have developed the electricity from her back, and fire from her temper, and you are lucky if you escape a smart scratching. On the other hand, draw your hand with the hair, and what a change! Pussy bends gently beneath the pressure, and falls into that purring song of hers which is so expressive of blissful feeling, and which seems to say: “Go on, my dear fellow; if you don’t get tired, I shall not.” Just so with that creature who is so apt to be cross-grained, mulish, and perverse, — man. To get along smoothly with him, to influence him for good, to reclaim him from vice, you must work in the line of his disposition. Yet, obvious as this is, we every day see persons failing to bend others to their purposes, and mak-



ing them enemies instead of friends, merely because they are not careful to study their peculiarities of humor, and take them "with the grain." Parents stifle the affections of their children, employers lose the good-will or provoke the hostility of their workmen, teachers fill the hearts of their pupils with gall and wormwood, the happiness of married pairs is blighted, controversialists deepen and embitter the prejudices of their opponents, nations exasperate nations, and philanthropic schemes involving the happiness of thousands are blasted, because this one simple secret of moral management is wilfully neglected or carelessly overlooked.

Depend upon it, reader, that however deeply *you* may delight to play the tyrant, no one of your fellow-men loves to be the subject of such despotism one whit better than yourself. Take our word for it, it is easier to coax a man out of a thousand errors or bad courses than to flog, scold, or drive him out of one. It has been said that more flies are caught with molasses than with vinegar; the truth is, they are never caught with vinegar. There is nothing which renders the human biped so unmanageable as a piqued self-esteem. There is all the difference of heaven and hell between the feelings of one who has been affectionately requested to do a thing and those of one who has been imperiously ordered, as if he were a slave. Harsh words obstruct the progress of reason, blunt the keen edge of argument, and produce among the dearest and oldest friends that estrangement and sad separation so vividly described by Coleridge:—

" Each spoke words of high disdain  
And insult to his heart's best brother;  
They parted — ne'er to meet again!  
But never either found another

To free the hollow heart from paining ;  
They stood aloof, the scars remaining,  
Like cliffs which had been rent asunder :  
    A dreary sea now flows between.  
But neither heat nor frost nor thunder  
Shall wholly do away, I ween,  
The marks of that which once hath been."

"If I wanted to punish an enemy," says Sydney Smith, "I would fasten on him the continued trouble of hating somebody," — a saying full of philosophy. Immeasurably more painful, as well as harmful, to any one is it actively to dislike another person than to be disliked, — to hate than to be hated. On the other hand, the good-will we manifest to others reacts upon ourselves. Dr. Doddridge, in one of his letters, relates a saying of his daughter (who was blessed with an angelic disposition) which strikingly illustrates this. "Father," said she one day, "I do not know how it is that everybody loves me ; I suppose it is because I love everybody." Many persons are habitually unkind, because nobody has been kind to them. Ill-favored or ugly in their personal appearance, they have been kept by their fellow-men in badgered and hopeless inferiority ; and, denied the luxury of kind words to themselves, they withhold them from others. Who can wonder at the result?

Would you win the good-will of your fellow-men, or influence them for good? Respect their honest prejudices, however much they may clash with your own ; yield to their whims, where no principle is concerned ; lean to the trustful rather than to the suspicious side ; and speak gentle words rather than words of censure. An old legend, — versified by Dr. Holmes, assures us that a man condemned to be beheaded had his head severed so neatly by the

stroke of a razor-edged scimitar, that he would not believe that the sentence had been inflicted until the executioner offered him a pinch of snuff, and he sneezed his head off. It has been happily said that graciousness can sugar-coat a "no" so as to make it taste like "yes." The gracious manners of the Duke of Marlborough made it even more pleasing to be denied a favor by him than to receive it from another man.

Wisely sings Tennyson, "Gentle words are always gain;" and a wiser than Tennyson has said that "a soft answer turneth away wrath." It is said that bees and wasps will not sting a person whose face is rubbed with honey. Remember Æsop's fable. It was not all the blustering violence of the tempest that led the traveller to throw off his cloak; he was coaxed to do so by the mild and genial beams of the sun.

**Strawberries.** "'Give me a glut of strawberries;' and, lo!  
Straight through my blood and very bones they go!"

A brilliant English poet, who sang the "Pleasures of Hope," tells us, —

"My heart leaps up when I behold  
A rainbow in the sky."

We do not hesitate to say that ours leaps up at the announcement that strawberries—ripe, luscious strawberries—will soon be in the market and on our tables. It is this dainty and delicious berry of which an old divine is said by good Izaak Walton to have observed, that "doubtless God might have made a better berry, but doubtless God never did." Some of the most celebrated physicians have commended this fruit for certain physical disorders, even

the most obstinate, — as consumption, and as an antidote for the gout. Cheap as strawberries are in June and July, we hope to see them become cheaper, so that all men, even the poorest, may enjoy them. Strawberries are not only delicious to eat, but beautiful to look at and pleasant to smell. The noble Othello must have thought so, since his first gift to Desdemona was a handkerchief “spotted with strawberries.” What dish, in the whole round of epicurean delights, can one call up before the mind’s eye, if he is unsophisticated in his tastes, more luxurious than the simple one of strawberries and cream? What a flood of agreeable recollections is conjured up by the very sound of the words! “They seem to set one’s page floating like a bowl.”

Fontenelle esteemed strawberries as the most tempting and satisfying of all “creature comforts,” and in his last illness used to exclaim, “If I can but reach the season of strawberries!” As he was then in his hundredth year, what an amount of healthful enjoyment they must in twenty lustums have yielded him! He did not need to live in that “Plurality of Worlds” of which he wrote so charmingly, to extract from them all the satisfaction they are capable of yielding. Shakespeare makes Richard III. say to the bishop, in that scene of frightful calmness and smooth speaking which precedes his burst of thunder against Hastings: “My lord of Ely, when I was last in Holborn, I saw good strawberries in your garden there: I do beseech you, send for some of them.” The poets generally have lavished their most glowing praises on strawberries. Sir John Suckling, in his richly-colored portrait of a beautiful girl, has made the dying leaves of strawberries precious, —

" Eyes full and bright,  
 With breath as sweet as double violets,  
 And wholesome as dying leaves of strawberries."

But of all the poets who have sung on this inspiring theme, an Italian bard, a Jesuit, takes precedence. That charming gossip, Leigh Hunt, speaks of a poem of that writer in two cantos of nine hundred lines, which ends with the following bridal climax, considered by him, doubtless, as the highest one possible, and the very cream even of strawberries and sugar. After apostrophizing two young friends of his, he concludes with this blessing, —

" Around this happy pair may joy serene  
 On wings of balm forever wind and play;  
 And laughing health her roses shake between,  
 Making their life one long, sweet, flowery way.  
 May bliss, true bliss, pure, self-possessed of mien,  
 Be absent from their side, no, not a day.  
 In short, to sum up all that earth can prize,  
 May they have sugar to their strawberries!"

**Pelting with Precious Stones.** A BRILLIANT critic, in reviewing some years ago a lecture by an eminent New Englander, remarked that he overwhelmed the devotees of sensuality of all sorts with a shower of stones, and adds: "But what precious stones they are! Diamond, ruby, and sapphire with him are ordinary missiles, and the meanest among his projectiles is a carbuncle, or a Scotch pebble at the least. Our apprehension is, that the objects at which this brilliant artillery is aimed may take so much pleasure in the sight and sound as not to mind the sense. The danger is, that they may stand stock still to be shot at, in mute admiration of the splendid weapons with which they are assailed, saying in their hearts with Phœbe, in 'As you Like it,' —



“ ‘Sweet sir, we pray you chide a year together,  
We had rather hear you chide than another woo.’ ”

Is not the effect of some “brilliant” sermons, denunciatory of sin or sins, similar to that here so felicitously described? Is not the dazzling fence of the rhetoric often enjoyed by men who remain insensible to the warnings of the preacher, — the glitter of the blade admired by many who, absorbed in this admiration, do not feel its point? Such spiritual weapons might be commended if their effects were like those of the magnificent ones used by the soldiers in Rome, when, in A. D. 537, it was besieged by the Goths under Vitiges, and defended by the heroic Belisarius. The mole or sepulchre of Hadrian, now the castle of St. Angelo, was then converted for the first time to the uses of a citadel. It was covered with the white marble of Paros, and decorated with the statues of gods and heroes; and these masterpieces of art, the works of Praxiteles and Lysippus, were torn from their lofty pedestals and hurled into the ditch on the heads of the besiegers, who were defeated with great slaughter, and compelled to raise the siege.

**The Results of a Fall.** IN reading the biographies of eminent men, one is often surprised to learn what little things, sometimes but a feather’s weight, turn in their youth, or even infancy, the scale of their destiny. A severe fall is not a little thing; but it is remarkable that such an accident, when he was a child at nurse, should have changed Talleyrand’s character and entire career. But for that seemingly unfortunate event, he would have been, instead of the consummate statesman, pre-eminent by his exquisite tact, his finesse and dexterity, as well as

daring, simply a noble of the old *régime*. Indolent, voluptuous, and profligate, he would have ended his days in exile, or, more likely, under the knife of the guillotine; and European history, which his genius so powerfully shaped, would have been utterly unaffected by his influence. It is said, that, according to the traditions of his house, Talleyrand should have been a soldier, but that a cripple could not be; and he was informed that his birth-right would be transferred to his younger brother. "Why so?" demanded the boy. "Because you are a cripple," was the cold-blooded reply. Whatever of good might have existed in his original nature, these words, says a writer, crushed out. "The flavor of their bitterness lingered in his heart unto the last days of his life. From the hour in which they were spoken, his disposition gradually changed; he became taciturn, callous, and calculating; a cynic, a heartless debauchee, sparing neither man nor woman that stood in the path of his interest or his pleasure. He had not been spared; why should he spare others? It was not for nothing he earned thereafter the title of *le diable boiteux*."

**A Poet's In-** A YEAR or two ago, while enjoying in September and October the charms of rural life at Franconia, N. H., we brushed the dust from our copy of Thomson's "Seasons," — a work to whose felicities of description the practice of parsing in it, when a boy at school, did not wholly deaden us, — and re-read it with keen delight. We had turned over but a few leaves when we came to a passage on cruelty to animals, betraying a singular inconsistency of the author. In the beautiful poem on "Spring," he deploras the cruelty of man in slay-

ing and eating the plain ox, — “that harmless, honest, guileless animal,” — and then counsels the reader to go angling for trout; and —

“Straight, as above the surface of the flood,  
They wanton rise, or urged by hunger leap,  
*Then fix, with gentle twitch, the barbed hook :*  
Some lightly tossing to the grassy bank,  
And to the shelving shore dragging some,  
With various hand proportion’d to their force.”

The poet then depicts the angler’s efforts to lure from his dark haunt “the monarch of the brook,” — till, at last, as a cloud shades the sun, “he desperate takes the death with sullen plunge,” and running out “all the lengthened line,” struggles to get free. Not a word of commiseration for the poor fish drops from the poet’s pen, but it is evidently with a burst of sympathetic exultation in your triumph that he sings, —

“With yielding hand  
That feels him still, yet to his finny course  
Gives way, you now retiring, following now,  
Across the stream, exhaust his idle rage:  
Till, floating broad upon his breathless side,  
And to his fate abandon’d, to the shore  
You gaily drag your unresisting prize.”

**The Value of** BREVITY, conciseness, condensation, etc.,  
**Iteration.** have been so much lauded by writers on rhetoric that the necessity for occasional diffuseness in public discourses is not properly recognized. Preachers of the gospel are sometimes unjustly censured by literary critics, because the censors do not know, or forget, that the average hearer often needs to have a thought — especially a fine distinction in a doctrinal sermon — presented to his mind again and again, in different forms of expres-

sion, before he can apprehend it. Even the plainest truths require iteration in order to make a deep impression or a lasting lodgement in the mind. The forensic advocates who are most successful in winning verdicts from juries are fully conscious of this, and therefore, when they have thick skulls to penetrate, do not hesitate to indulge in what would otherwise be "damnable iteration." Rufus Choate, albeit he "drove a substantive and six" (adjectives), could be terse enough when he chose; but he would reiterate a statement of fact or an argument a dozen times or more, if he saw by the looks of a dull or a hard-headed juror that he was unconvinced.

Sir Albert Pell, a verbose and prolix but very successful English advocate, who made havoc of syntax and pronunciation every time he opened his mouth in court, is admitted to have owed his forensic victories largely to his iteration. When a gentleman criticised a jury address of his in an important cause, Pell "confessed and avoided" the justness of the criticism. "I certainly was confoundedly long," he replied; "but did you observe the foreman, a heavy-looking fellow in a yellow waistcoat? No more than one idea could ever stay in his thick head at a time, and I resolved that mine should be that one; so I hammered till I saw by his eyes that he had got it. Do you think I cared a — for what you young critics might say?" Lord Brougham was so impressed by this advocate's style of speaking that he said "it was not eloquence, — it was *pelloquence*, and deserved to have, in books of rhetoric, a chapter to itself."

**Pet Words.** ONE of the commonest weaknesses, even of cultivated men, is the excessive use of pet

words and phrases. It is, of course, a mark of poverty of language and of bad taste for a man to continue the use of such peculiarities after he has become conscious of them as such. Unfortunately, there is no one of a man's characteristics of which he is commonly more ignorant than of the shibboleth of his individual dialect; and though he can easily caricature or burlesque the speech of his acquaintances, he would be puzzled to do so with his own language. While it is true that we choose our own words, yet the *rationale* of our choice is a secret to us; it depends upon mental processes of which we have no knowledge.

A pet word of an eminent Baptist preacher, whose sermons we once used to hear, was "vocal;" that of a venerable editor of our acquaintance was "trend." Rarely did the one deliver a discourse in which something was not "vocal," or the other write an editorial in which the "trend" of certain things, opinions, or events was not duly noticed or discussed; but probably neither of these persons was conscious of this peculiarity, any more than was Macaulay of his excess of antithesis, or Cicero of his ever-recurring *esse videatur*. The pet word of "The Country Parson,"<sup>1</sup> which is made to do duty on almost every page of his recent "Twenty-five Years of St. Andrews," is "outstanding." The absurdities into which one may be betrayed by such a habit is ludicrously illustrated by an anecdote that used to be told by the late J. R. Lowell of two college acquaintances of his. The habitual phrase with which one of them modified every observation concerning any person was "for him." Being asked one day by Mr. Lowell, "Did n't Mr. — die very suddenly?"

<sup>1</sup> A. K. H. B.



the reply was, "Well — yes; *very* suddenly — for *him*." The other acquaintance overworked similarly the word "temporarily." When asked, "Where is H — now?" "Oh, he has cut his throat." "Cut his throat?" "Yes, — *temporarily*."

**Wisdom  
After the  
Event.**

How wise men are after the event! It matters not how sagely a project is planned, or how vigorously its execution is pushed, if it turn out ill; nor how ill-considered and Quixotic it be, if it turn out well. Failure blinds us to the merits of any enterprise, and success to its folly. It is useless for the unsuccessful man to show that it was through no fault of his own, but from unexpected causes which no human sagacity could have foreseen or provided for, that he failed, — in short, that he deserved success; the result shows that "there was a screw loose somewhere," either in the plan or execution, and his explanations fall on deaf ears. What aggravates our impatience with the plausible blockhead who fails, is, that we could have told him at the start how visionary his enterprise was, or how, by different management, he might have succeeded.

Had not Alexander the Great been interrupted for three days, in his march on Persia, by a sickness caused by a cold bath in the river Cydnus, he would have encountered with his small force the overwhelming army of the enemy on the plains, instead of in the narrow mountain passes of Cilicia; and would therefore, in all probability, have been defeated, instead of winning the great victory that founded the third monarchy in the world. How, in the former event, would the double-chinned wiseacres of Macedon have shaken their heads at the foolhardiness of the young king's ex-

pedition! and how sagely would all subsequent historians have declared that the catastrophe was what every sane man must have expected! Had Columbus not reached America in his attempt to find a new route to India, and returned to Palos with the loss of half his men, who can doubt that he would have been regarded as a moonstruck dreamer, whose failure was self-evident at the start?

On how many chances did the fame of Cortez hang! Had he been cut off on the causeway of Mexico, or had Narvaez overthrown him, how contemptuously would all future historians have spoken of his mad attempt to subdue a great half-civilized empire with less than three hundred men! As Cortez was successful, everybody of course sees how the Mexicans were overawed and overcome by the novel arms and skill of the Europeans, and how sagacious Cortez was to foresee this so clearly. How many persons have attributed the failure of Prince Charles, of England, in his expedition in 1745, to his delay after his victory at Prestonpans! Had he hurried on with his army to England, they say, instead of staying in Edinburgh six weeks to recruit, he might have swept all before him, and, in the consternation that would have followed, seized London and the British crown. Now, what were the actual probabilities in the case? We know that, after his losses in battle and by desertion, he could have counted at most upon a force of only twenty-five hundred men with which to invade England (whence he had no intelligence, no hopes of reinforcement, no resources in case of disaster); and hence there is hardly a doubt that, had he done so, he and his troops would have been surrounded and cut to pieces before they had marched halfway to the English capital. What, in that event, would the world have said of

Charles's invasion? The very persons who censure his delay at Edinburgh would have laughed to scorn the idea of his invading England with a handful of half-armed, undisciplined men.

It is surprising how much of the world's wisdom hinges on the event. The character of most extraordinary deeds is revealed to men only after they have been done. An insurrection against the government of a country, if unsuccessful, is a rebellion; if successful, a revolution. The world treats its heroes as the Spartan ruler, Lysurgus, did the detected thief: failure brands them with infamy, success crowns them with laurels. Had Grant's gunboats and transports been sunk by the rebel batteries in the Mississippi, when he ran by them at Vicksburg, or had his troops been surrounded and cut to pieces when he boldly placed them between the armies of the two Confederate chiefs, Joseph E. Johnston and J. E. Pemberton, only fifty miles apart, with what a "Sir Oracle" look of wisdom would all the military critics of the country have censured each of these daring deeds as ill planned and worse executed,—in short, worthy of a Bedlamite! So, had Prussia failed, when at war with Austria she marched troops at Bismarck's prompting into Hanover, Hesse Cassel, and Saxony, and seized their capitals, who can doubt that all "the knowing ones" would have shouted in a chorus, "I knew it would be so," and condemned the man of "iron and blood" as rash and headstrong?

It has been justly said that the very necessity which men feel of accounting for all things helps to drive their horns into the side of the unsuccessful. "They must see how it was, and be able 'not to wonder now;' and, for this purpose, assigning stupidity to the hero of the failure answers

exactly. It cuts the Gordian knot at once." Talleyrand once said: "Nothing succeeds so well as success." A truer saying would be: "The only thing that succeeds is success." It is characteristic of all the post-eventual prophets, that they are very careful not to hint at disaster before the event; but even should they do so, they would run little risk. When an enterprise succeeds, no one remembers the croaker or his foreboding; but if it fails, he can crow like chanticleer over his Cassandra-like predictions.

Let no one, then, who fails in any enterprise, waste time in self-vindication. His words will fall on stony ears. Let him remember the reply of Abraham Lincoln, when a friend of his wished to give to the press the facts touching a matter about which the President had been outrageously abused: "If the end brings me out right, what is said against me won't amount to anything; if the end brings me out wrong, ten angels swearing it was right would make no difference."

**Puzzling a Yankee.** AMERICANS are proverbially an inquisitive people; yet, from the very necessity which this disposition occasions, there is no person who better understands the art of parrying and baffling inquisitiveness than a Yankee. We were quite amused, some years ago, by an account given by a city friend of a colloquy which came off in a country village at which he had tarried for a day, between himself and one of the "natives," who manifested an itching curiosity to pry into his affairs.

"How de dew?" exclaimed the latter, bustling up to him as he alighted for a few moments at a hotel; "reckon I've seen you somewhere 'fore now!"

"Oh, yes, no doubt," was the answer; "I've been there often in my life."

"S'pose you are going to — to —" (expecting the name of the place to be supplied).

"Just so — I go there regularly once a year."

"And you've just come from — from —"

"Exactly, sir; you are quite right; that is my place of residence."

"Raally, now, dew tell! I s'pose you are a lawyer, or a doctor, or maybe a trader, or perhaps some other profession or calling?"

"Yes, I have always pursued some one of those professions."

"Got business in the country, eh?"

"Yes, I am at this time busily engaged in travelling."

"I see, by your trunk, you are from Boston. Anything stirring in Boston?"

"Yes — men and women, horses and carriages, and a furious northeaster."

"You don't say so! Dew tell! Waall, I declare now, you are 'tarnal 'cute. What d'ye think they'll do with Sims?"

"Why, sir, it is my opinion that they'll either deliver him up to the claimant or let him go free."

"You've had a monstrous sight of rain in Boston — did an awful sight of damage, I s'pose?"

"Yes, it wet all the buildings and made the streets damp — *very* damp, indeed."

"Did n't old Fannil Hall get a soaking?"

"No, they hauled it on to the Common, under the Liberty Tree."

"You are a curus chap; I guess you're kinder foolin'.



Pray, mister, if it's a civil question, what might be your name?"

"It *might* be Smith; but it is not, by a long chalk. The fact is, sir, I never had a name. When I was born, my mother was so busy that she forgot to name me; and soon after I was swapped away by mistake for another boy, and am now just about applying to the Legislature for a name. When I get it, I will send you my card. Good-morning, sir!"

And so saying, the speaker jumped into his carriage and drove off, leaving the Paul Pry of the place scratching his head in bewilderment, and evidently in more perplexity than before he had commenced his catechisings.

**Horse-Jockeys.** READER, did you ever have any dealings with a professional horse-jockey? Did you ever know one to be outwitted — except by another jockey? We have known many a shrewd man who flattered himself that his eye-teeth were elaborately cut, to be "taken in and done for" by them. Men of other callings may be recognized by some peculiarity; but there is none to betray the dealer in spavined and wall-eyed horses. There are dealers who look like clergymen, being dressed always in black, with the addition, perhaps, of a weed on the hat; and the illusion is heightened by the fact that they are always mourning over human depravity, especially lying and dishonesty. Of the lapse of time the veteran dealer is as oblivious as a young lady who has turned her second corner. His fifteen-year-olds are affectionately termed colts, and their only fault is that they are so mettlesome. Spring-halt is only "steadiness of gait," spavin is "a temporary stiffness of the joints," and a disposition to kick and bite is

only the animal's playfulness, — “playful as a kitten, sir; that's all.” A balky horse “stands like a rock,” — or, as a New York jockey was wont to say, “You will find him *there* every time.” A runaway who has smashed a dozen carriages is “a horse of spirit, — none of your slow crabs.” It is said that one of these voracious gentlemen, having occasion to sell a horse that had killed his former owner, coolly advertised that he was “to be sold in consequence of his owner *going abroad with no intention of returning!*”

### October.

OCTOBER, the sweetest, saddest month of all the year, has come to pay her visit, and to warn us of decay! Summer, — soft-eyed Summer! art thou gone? Yes; we still in fancy hear the knell of thy fallen glories ringing low in the vales, as thy faint breath steals from leaf to leaf away! Autumn has commenced, at last, its reign of incipient desolation. The deep and opulent green of the summer verdure is fading into a variety of sickly tints under the chill night air; and the dry rustling of leaves, robbed of their juicy elasticity, and scattered from the twigs on which they nodded and danced at every breath of the autumnal breeze, teaches us the sad but salutary lesson that life's winter is approaching.

But why should we mourn? There is, after all, a mellowness and a pensive beauty in the autumn landscape, which, to the contemplative mind, is more fascinating than the gaudier livery of the summer. The skies are serene and clear, the streams blue and beautiful, and the atmosphere is of that fine transparency which lends a peculiar charm to our autumnal heaven. Go into the thick deep woods, where the vegetation “dies like a dolphin,” changing to a

thousand splendid hues. The trees have not yet lost their fulness and grace of contour, but now reign in glory beyond that of any oriental king. The yellow tint of the tremulous birch; the ruddy brown of the oak; the deep carmine and purple of the woodbine; the dark scarlet of the ash; the orange of the elm, and the crimson of the maple that blushes at the first kiss of the frost, — all mingle their gorgeous dyes, as if a splendid sunset had fallen down in fragments on the wood and set it all ablaze! This changeful though lovely scenery lends a touching spell to Autumn, which is in unison with the mournful melodies of the dying year. A Sabbath stillness reigns throughout Nature, broken only by the wind's low sigh; or if perchance other sounds are heard, they are but the dashing of the sere and withered leaf into the silver stream, the chirp of the squirrel gathering in his harvest of nuts, or the wail of the solitary crow croaking psalm-tunes from the old oak in the cornfield.

Now is the season for excursions far away into the country, — the very month for long walks. You see gardens, with jolly sunflowers lolling their good-humored faces over the walls; orchards, with trees full of apples, whose great round cheeks are blushing with crimson, or beaming with gold; goodly plantations of honest pumpkins, sunning themselves, or turning up their fat yellow bellies on the cornhill to prepare for the festivities of Thanksgiving. You see patient anglers, bending hour after hour over the stream or placid lake, in quest of the speckled trout or gleaming white perch, doomed to gratify the dire appetite of patrons of Young's or Parker's. Now and then the sharp report of a fowling-piece rings through the neighboring wood, and the puff of smoke curls up gracefully into the sunny air.

We love October. It is a chaste and gentle month; it has not the frigid aspect of December; it has not the coquetry of April, or the fire and passion of July; it kisses our cheek with zephyrs sweet and soft, — “sweet as the smile when fond lovers meet, and soft as their parting tear.” Day pours down its profusion of light now with a moderate intensity of heat, and the intellectual and physical systems begin to resume the vigorous tone which had languished and been paralyzed under the fires of a vertical sun.

Never strayed from Paradise a more beautiful and bewitching day than the one whose silent splendors we are now enjoying. Even the dim and dust-stained panes in our window wear a glow of cheerfulness; and the yellow sunshine, as it streams through the discolored glass, athwart a long mountain of newspapers piled up in front of us, and rests on the page whereon we breathe our “charmed thoughts,” sends a warm and delightful thrill — like that of generous wine — along every eager nerve, until it mounts into the brain and expands into living pictures of beauty and happiness. Look away into yonder vault of heaven, at this sunset hour; how the resplendent hues of topaz and amethyst and gold beautifully blend with each other, and stream in living light across the ether sky! Whose soul does not thrill with ecstasy, while gazing on scenes like these? What, it has well been asked, are all the canopies and balconies and galleries of human state, hung with the richest drapery that ever the wizard Art drew forth from his matchless loom in gorgeous folds, in comparison with the radiant palaces of Autumn, framed in the sky by the Spirit of the season for his own last residence, ere he move in yearly migration, with all his court, to some



foreign clime far beyond the seas? In what a blaze of glory the sun goes down at last, and how delicately beautiful the quiet radiance of the moon! — and the brooks, how soothing is their voice even in the still night:

“A noise like of a hidden brook  
In the leafy month of June,  
That to the sleeping woods all night  
Singeth a quiet tune.”

But sounds and sights like these are not for literary scribes. They disturb us with an emotion too deep to be endured. They beget desperate and rebellious thoughts, — resolutions of dashing out of our den, and hurrying away from books, paper, ink, and pens to some leafy retreat, to enjoy what Horace happily calls “a sweet oblivion of the cares of anxious life.”

**Oaths.** THE opinion is steadily gaining ground in England, it is said, that all public oaths should be abolished. The imposition of an oath, it is urged, is degrading to a good man, since it implies that his simple word is not to be trusted; while, on the other hand, the bad man who is bold enough to violate God’s moral law will not hesitate to brave his anger against perjury. The experience of the courts of justice shows that oaths afford an almost inappreciable guaranty against false testimony. A distinguished English advocate states that as the result of forty years of practice he has known but two instances where the parties, in the case of an oath offered after evidence, have been prevented by a sense of religion from persisting in their testimonies. Every one knows that perjuries which do not violently offend public opinion, and which are not legally punishable, are occurring continually.



When sheep-stealing and petty larceny were capital offences in England, juries did not hesitate to violate their oaths by refusing to convict, in defiance of overwhelming evidence. They had sworn to decide according to the law and the testimony; but they knew that public opinion, which was outraged by these Draconian laws, would justify them in a verdict of acquittal. It is said that while these laws were in force, an eminent judge certified that on one circuit alone more than five hundred "perjured verdicts" were given. The oaths of allegiance did not prevent Parliament from changing the dynasty in 1688; nor did their oaths to support the Constitution and laws of the United States prevent the Southern members of the Cabinet and of Congress from raising the flag of rebellion in 1861.

If oaths are needed to secure truthful testimony, why are they ever dispensed with? Why are men allowed to affirm in the law courts? Testimony given before Parliament is not under oath; yet who doubts that it is just as credible as that given in courts of justice?

**Antediluvian** READER, did you ever think of what delightful lives men must have lived in the days before the flood? Fancy a note payable in ten-year instalments seventy years from date, or a draft payable at three months' sight! Imagine a thief or a burglar sentenced to jail for sixty winters! Think of a larder with two or three dried whales hanging on its hooks, or a huge barrel with a dozen ichthyosauri in pickle! How delightful to call on a friend and be treated to cold mammoth ("Cut and come again") on the sideboard, and to wine of a vintage a hundred and fifty years past! Think of a man with a heart-trouble of only ten or twelve decades, or dying of quick consumption after a "lingering illness" of a century!

**Jack-o'-Lanterns.** IN our childhood, one of the chief objects of our wonder and delight was Jack-o'-Lantern. Can we ever forget the throbbing of heart, the thrill of ecstasy, with which we hailed "the metaphysical stranger," — how we chuckled and crowed and clapped our hands with glee as our dazzled eyes followed him in a dark night through all the changeful figures of his fantastical harlequinade? Has any meteor since danced over our head that was half so resplendent? Since our attainment to manhood we have found that every man has his Jack-o'-Lantern, which, though the cheat takes an infinity of shapes, he pursues from the cradle to the grave.

To one man Jack comes in the shape of an old, musty, black-letter volume, an Elzevir, a "tall copy," an *editio princeps*, for which he pays a fabulous price, and of which he never reads more than the titlepage. To another man Jack comes in the shape of a Douw, a Cuyp, or a Claude; the mysterious gloom of Rembrandt, the savageness of Salvator, or the "corregiosity of Correggio." He becomes learned in oils and varnishes, dreams of old masters, and hangs about Leonard's auction room, where he bows his head at a cost of \$50 a nod. To a third man, Jack-o'-Lantern appears in the form of an autograph, — an old letter, a fly-leaf torn from a book, or franked envelope, — which he dotes upon more than a miser on his gold. Jack tempts one person in the shape of a bottle of Clos-Vougeot or Johannisberg which never crossed the Atlantic, or "fine, crusty old port" whose thick crust and "bee's wing" are proofs only of its decomposition and the loss of some of its best qualities, and which renders him the victim of gout, diabetes, or liver disease; another, he dazzles as a cigar, enveloping him in a cloud of smoke, shattering his

nerves, and destroying his digestion. Old coins are one man's Jack-o'-Lantern, and old postage-stamps another's. To one class he presents himself in the guise of a splendid carriage and a pair of dark bays, with which they ride to bankruptcy, and perhaps a prison; while to another class he disguises himself as a dice-box, a pack of cards, or a race-horse, on which they stake all the money they can raise or borrow, till a pistol-shot closes their careers.

**Passionless Men.** THE celebrated schoolman, Albertus Magnus, who flourished in the thirteenth century, in speaking of human passions, observes that the moral world without them would be like the physical without darkness and without rain, without hills and valleys, — nay, without earth and water. In this world, he argues, most things go by contrast. But for hard, you could not know soft; but for sweet, you could not speak of bitter; you could not understand deep, if it were not for shallow; surliness is the parent of sweetness of disposition. Without passion, the world would fall in pieces. A man without passion, — what can he be compared to? A climate without storms, a cloudless eastern sky, all sunshine and glow, and clearness and sameness; or, rather, a stagnant pond, a dead sea of slumbering tranquillity, over which the refreshing breeze hath never blown to cool the beams of midsummer, on which the many-colored pennons of imagination never waved. “Such an individual is a burdensome companion. He neither thinks nor speaks, neither sings a song, *nor kicks a coward*, nor enjoys a hearty, jolly laugh with an acquaintance. Some of the old Greek dramatists used to make fun of a man of this stamp. This was all right; only the wit and fun would be thrown away on such a lifeless lump of clay.”

Is there not truth in this (which, by the way, anticipates the doctrine of those German philosophers who found their views of scientific truth on the principle of contrariety)? Theoretically, we all admire the passionless man; but is he not a little insipid? Dr. Theodore Cuyler says that Froude, the historian, once said to him of an amiable English dean: "I wish that Dean Stanley was a little better hater." "It is not in Stanley to hate anybody but the devil," replied Cuyler. Who has not, at times, entertained Froude's wish regarding some of his own self-possessed acquaintances, especially where the calmness was inborn rather than the result of long and difficult self-schooling? Is it not better occasionally to blaze and be quenched, than to smoulder and be choked; better to give your friend a handle against you, than to overwhelm him with a consciousness of your perfections? "Is it not better," as another has said, "to let him sometimes have to pardon *your* outbreaks, than to have him feel that *his* stand, in silent array, a very millstone round the neck of love; better that he should love you, than that you should have given him the most excellent reasons why he ought to do so, — given them, too, perhaps, in vain? Is it not possible to be so patient and self-denying and self-controlled, that you gain the respect and love of your friends merely to find that they have worn out your own?"

We once knew a most amiable man, a Christian whom apparently nothing could ruffle, and whom for years we admired as a pattern of saintliness, till one day, at a church-meeting, an occasion occurred when he should have rebuked in thunder tones certain proposed measures and a jesuitical advocacy of them, — both of which he abhorred, — but from fear of giving offence he was dumb. Then we



saw at what a price, what a cost of manliness, pluck, and other noble qualities, his placidity and evenness of temper had been acquired. The men by whom the world has been most benefited — who have stormed and demolished the fortresses of error, and wrought great moral, religious, and political reforms — have been made in a different mould. Their passions have hurried them into many excesses and errors, but we must take the evil with the good, and not quarrel with the winds that give life and freshness to the atmosphere, though they sometimes swell into a storm or even a cyclone. When Sir C. J. Napier, the hero of Scinde, was living, there were Englishmen who regretted his “combativeness” and “want of serenity,” — that he and his brother William lived in a storm, instead of “above the clouds.” But when was any wrong overthrown without noise; any citadel of tyranny captured, any battle ever won, by “serenity”? Such complainers remind one of Shakespeare’s “trim lord,” who, as the soldiers hot from the shock of earnest battle “bore dead bodies by unmanly,” talked like a waiting gentlewoman. But for the villanous saltpetre, the noise and wounds, “he would himself have been a soldier.” When Count Joseph De Maistre, minister to Russia from Sardinia in the first two decades of this century, was cautioned by a friend against the heat of his style, he replied: “Would you have fire that does not burn, or water that does not wet? It is impossible to have my style without having my defects.” Gentleness, moderation, serenity, and courtesy are admirable qualities, worthy of careful cultivation; but to demand them in a Luther, a Knox, or a Garrison, is to demand a moral monster, an intellectual paradox, a being born under the contending influences of Mercury and Saturn.



**The "Dulness" of the Pulpit.** OF all the foolish articles that appear in our daily newspapers, none appear to us more senseless than those in which the so-called "dulness" of the pulpit is invidiously contrasted with the exaggerated "eloquence and brilliancy" of the popular lecture. The usual mode of disparagement — less frequent, indeed, now than formerly, but not yet wholly discarded — is to compare the average sermon of ten or twenty thousand men who address the same hearers a hundred times a year for years in succession, with the productions of a dozen picked lecturers, who shoot off one rocket a year across the land; or, to contrast ordinary discourses on what worldly men call dry and threadbare themes, with the sifted articles of a great leading magazine, forming, probably, two or three per cent of the whole number from which they have been winnowed, and written on popular and exciting subjects. The gross unfairness of this procedure is too transparent to need comment.

We believe that so far from manifesting less intellectual vigor than the popular lecturers of the land, the clergy, as a body, show in their discourses an ability equal to that of any other class of professional men. Nor are they less generally alert for information, hospitable to valuable new ideas, or abreast with the intelligence of the age in which they live. So far as our acquaintance extends, the ministers who live at the centres of intelligence generally keep all the windows of the mind open, and, when a new and striking book appears, are the very first to read it. When these men are contrasted disparagingly with lecture celebrities, we are impelled to ask, How many *brilliant* lecturers, among the hundreds who in the palmy days of the platform followed that calling, could one point to? You can

tell them on your fingers, without using the thumbs. Even these sustained their reputations by a painful economy of resources. No one was ever more thrifty in the use of his materials than Wendell Phillips, the most brilliant of them all, whose whole stock-in-trade for thirty or more years consisted of but three or four lectures, which he delivered over and over again. Writing a new lecture seemed, in his case, to be one of "The Lost Arts." Every time he appeared on the platform, he exhibited the same pyrotechnics, — treating his hearers to the same stereotyped dogmatism that America has no "institutions;" to the trite quotation from Lord John Russell, that with parties, as with snakes, the tail moves the head; to the worn-out witicism of Douglas Jerrold, that some men refuse to walk by the light of the new moon, out of respect for that venerable institution the old one; to the funny mistake of the boy who supposes that the beam moves the steamboat, not knowing that there is "a fanatic" in the hull, — and so on. On a few leading ideas the lecturer rang the changes as on a peal of bells; with all his radicalism and supposed originality and "breadth of thought," he could not get out of his rut.

A man who squeezes all his wit and wisdom — the net result of years of thinking, reading, and observation — into two or three lectures, has no excuse for dulness. But to write and preach one hundred sermons in a year is a terrible rôle for a man without a large capital stock of thought, knowledge, and electricity to undertake. Let a brilliant lawyer lecture two or three times a week on the general principles of law, besides making "side" addresses all the year through on temperance, charity, missions, the Indians, etc.; let the men who electrify crowded houses

with a few oft-repeated discourses deliver two new lectures a week on widely diversified topics; and it will be seen whether all the dulness in our public speaking is monopolized by the pulpit.

**Genius and Pains-taking.** It is a favorite notion of some persons that genius is nothing but an infinite capacity for taking pains. In support of this theory, Buffon and Hogarth are cited, who both declared genius to be nothing but labor and patience; and an actual or supposed saying of Newton is quoted, that his mathematical excellence was due to nothing but to his having labored more persistently than other men. In like manner, Porson used to say that he had made himself what he was by intense labor, and that any one might become quite as good a critic as he was, "*if* [mark that "*if*"] he would only take the trouble to make himself such." But those who define genius thus forget the necessary limitation, that the infinite pains must be taken by a capable person. They forget, too, that this very capacity for persistent labor, for endurance, is just as rare an endowment as a capacity for quick or instant perception; and that a man who, like Newton, can chain his mind to the exclusive consideration of a mathematical problem for many hours in succession has one of the most uncommon of all mental gifts. Because Newton's success in mastering such problems was proportional to the amount of labor he bestowed upon them, does it follow that the same thing would be true of a feeble or even an average brain? Would toil alone, however intense or protracted, have produced the "*Paradise Lost*" or the "*Principia*," the Sistine Madonna or the Venus de Medicis? Does the born dwarf ever grow to the average size? "*Rousseau*

tells a story of a painter's servant, who resolved to be the rival or the conqueror of his master. He abandoned his livery to live by his pencil. But, instead of the Louvre, he stopped at a sign-post."

"If," says Porson, in the quotation above, "he would only take the trouble," etc. That provoking "If"! How many possibilities it blasts! How many potentialities of literature, science, war, and commerce it foils! How many subjunctive great men, who might, could, or would have been famous had not this or that condition been wanting, has it doomed to obscurity! But for this little microscopic particle, how many an Archimedes, who lacks a standing-place, would move the world! An acute German writer, Karl Hildebrand, observes of Thiers as a historian that he is perpetually reconstructing history as it should and would have been "if" this or that event had not happened. It was a mere accident that France was defeated at Trafalgar and Waterloo; the fall of the First Empire was due only to some sin of commission or omission on the part of Napoleon. As if the fall of every empire was not due to such a sin or sins! The modern Frenchman refuses to believe that an inner necessity determines the chain of events, and that this necessity is to be found in the national character.

**A Word for Grumblers.** SOME one has humorously said that if it be no part of the English constitution, it is certainly part of the constitution of Englishmen, to grumble. Though blessed with a generally diffused abundance of the good things of this life, John Bull is nevertheless the most sulky and dissatisfied person alive. Owning lands in every quarter of the globe, loaning money to all the nations



of the earth, with his coffers stuffed with gold, and his stomach with roast-beef and plum-pudding, he always thinks himself on the brink of ruin; he complains of his debt, his taxes, his encumbrances, and talks sourly of the distress of England. "Beggars all! beggars all!" is his morning, noon, and nightly cry.

A genuine son of John Bull, it is hardly an exaggeration to say, is born grumbling. If a man is a native of the "fast-anchored isle," and does n't begin to find fault as soon as he begins to talk, you may conclude that his soul has been geographically slandered by his body. What boasting is to a Yankee, smoking to a Dutchman, spinning "metaphesies" to a Scotchman, blarneying to an Irishman, or congeeing and *politesse*-ing to a Frenchman, grumbling is to a true-born Englishman. He grumbles at everything to be grumbled at; and when there is nothing to be grumbled at, he grumbles at that. He grumbles at old institutions because they are not new, and at new institutions because they are not old. He grumbles at law because it restrains him, and he grumbles at liberty because it does not restrain others. Cut his throat, and he may forgive you; pick his pocket, and he may pardon you: but try to convince him that he has no occasion to grumble, and he will knock you down.

While John Bull grumbles too much, we Americans, it is to be feared, do not grumble enough. Look at the impositions we submit to from railroad corporations, corrupt legislatures, public performers, and so forth, without a murmur! John Bull, being accustomed to be scolded, as well as to scold, learns at last to bear reproof with good temper; while we are too apt to fly into a passion, and thus become deaf to all good advice, and



confirm ourselves in every bad practice. The main weakness of Americans — the giant defect, which prevents them from reforming their misdeeds — is that they are too thin-skinned. We are always sounding our own praises — crying up our institutions, manners, and customs to the third heaven — except when we wrangle as Republicans and Democrats; and then we paint each other as black as the imps of Erebus. On the Fourth of July, and in listening to our legislative spouters and “spread-eagle” orators generally, foreigners are often disgusted by the gaseous eulogies on “our great and growing country,” “our free and enlightened institutions,” “our gigantic strides of improvement,” and so forth, — all seemingly implying a belief that we have reached our political goal. The pernicious effects of this habit of self-puffery are evident. It nourishes in us a ridiculous, coxcomical conceit, whence springs a sickly sensitiveness to blame, and a waspishness whenever our faults are hinted at, which are almost insuperable obstacles to self-improvement.

No doubt grumbling may be carried to an extreme. We have no sympathy with those chronic fault-finders whose first principle in ethics is that “whatever is, is wrong;” who complain that everything is “out of fix,” from Dan to Beersheba, yet will not lift their little fingers to set anything right. As the worst workmen are commonly the readiest to “strike,” so the laziest and most worthless members of society are the promptest to complain. “The worst wheel of all is the one that creaks.” But, after all deductions, great good grows out of grumbling, grate as it may on our ears. Who can doubt that the very discontents and fears which are so marked a feature in the character of our brother Bull are the means of filling his treasury, and im-

proving his mental, moral, and social condition, by stimulating him to prodigious exertions? Would it not be an ominous thing should he stop growling, and become content with the glory and riches he has already achieved? The nobility of a grumbler whose complaints are prompted by an earnest devotion to principle, compared with the nonchalance and dilettantism that are indifferent to all principles, was well expressed by Mr. Spurgeon in some remarks on the so-called querulousness of Mr. Gladstone: "But Mr. Gladstone, it is said, has such an irritable temper. That Mr. Gladstone has a temper, is a mercy for us all. Men who have no principles, but can veer round with every wind, may well put on the placid style, and never have a temper; but the man of principle must be angry against everything that looks shifty and tricky. I have heard of persons who were said to be 'as easy as an old shoe;' and, as a rule, such people are *generally of about as much value.*"

No great change, innovation, or revolution was ever effected without a great deal of previous grumbling against the evil to be redressed. Moses was a grumbler, or he would have remained in Egypt. Luther was a grumbler, and inveighed vehemently against the indulgences and marital laws of Rome. Bacon began grumbling at sixteen, and kept grumbling all his life, at the old scholastic philosophy, which his own inductive system supplanted. Howard grumbled at the frightful prison systems of nearly all the civilized nations of the globe, till he compelled a reform. Burke, Fox, and Chatham grumbled when the mother country undertook to tyrannize over the American colonies; and it is to their complaints, and those of Franklin, Adams, and Jefferson, that we owe our indepen-

dence. But for the grumblers, the Garrisons, Adamsses, and Phillipses, the dark wing of slavery would be still overshadowing our land; while in Europe, but for such fault-finders, the despots, wherever there is a spark of liberty, would trample it out by violence or quench it in blood.

**Paradoxes in Belief.** WHAT startling contradictions, what bewildering paradoxes, do we often find in men's opinions and conduct! It is said of "the most Christian king," Louis XV., whose life was one long orgy, that he was strictly orthodox in his religious belief. The victims of his vile pleasures were carefully instructed in the Catholic faith. While he was wallowing in every pollution, he was anxious to keep his harem free from the heresies of the Jansenists. Apropos to these Jansenists, is it not remarkable that they and the reformers before them should have championed liberty of conscience; and that the Jesuits, who believed in the freedom of the will, should have upheld slavery of conscience?

By the same law of irony, Zeno, a fatalist in theory, made his disciples heroes; and Epicurus, the upholder of liberty, made his disciples languid and effeminate. So, again, free-thinkers in religion are absolutist in politics,—witness Spinoza, Hobbes, Bolingbroke, Hume, and Schopenhauer; while men of cast-iron creeds are democratic. Again, you will sometimes meet with a Darwinian who is a fanatic for equality, and is shocked when he sees the "big fish" in the financial world devour the little, yet who all the while affirms that, by the laws of natural selection and the survival of the fittest, this is precisely what is going on in the animal world, and that the law is beneficent, being indispensable to progress.

**She did as Requested.** HAVE you ever read Mrs. C. M. Kirkland's books, "A Western Home; Who'll Follow?" "The Evening Book," etc.? She was one of the most attractive female writers of the first half of this century, and the forgetfulness into which she has so speedily sunk, with all her wit, wisdom, and shrewd sense, strikingly shows how fleeting is literary fame. A friend in Chicago, where she once resided, and who knew her well, told me one day the following anecdote in illustration of her vein of pungent satire.

An acquaintance of hers, whom we shall call John Jones, asked her to embroider his name on some fine linen handkerchiefs. "How will you have them embroidered?" asked Mrs. Kirkland. "Oh," was the reply, "with simple John Jones, — that is all." Judge of his surprise and mortification at finding on them, when returned, beautifully but too plainly embroidered the words, as directed, "*Simple John Jones!*" It is not often that ignorance or carelessness is so neatly rebuked.

**Championing Christianity in the Pulpit.** WHAT is more distasteful to a thinking man, who has weighed the arguments of modern disbelievers in Christianity, and knows how subtle and difficult to answer satisfactorily they often are, than to hear a preacher newly-fledged from a theological seminary refute them, as he fancies, with occasional thrusts of satire, in a Sunday discourse? We doubt whether the pulpit is the place even for trained and veteran Christian athletes, master of all the arts of fence, to cope with agnostic doubts and objections; but how disastrous must be the result when an over-eager, half-instructed, inexperienced controversialist essays to overthrow



them! Often the frequent mention of errors imposes on the imagination of the hearer and gives them an exaggerated importance, while it rouses sympathy with the objects of these reiterated attacks.

Again, as an able Baptist preacher in England has most wisely said, there is absolutely no connection between being forced by stress of argument to accept the doctrine of the cross of Christ and being led as a sinful man to put my trust in him as my Saviour. Rather, "the whole point of view and attitude of the man must be altered before the eager disputant becomes the earnest evangelist, and the convinced listener passes into the penitent disciple. You may shiver to pieces all the intellectual defences, but the garrison still gathers unsubdued into the central citadel of the heart. You cannot take it by batteries of argument. Another power alone will make the flag flutter down. Faith is an act of the will as well as of the understanding. Therefore, not logic, but the exhibition of Christ in his love and power, evokes it."

**Being and Seeming.** WHAT a prodigious waste of force would be prevented, if persons ambitious of distinction would act upon the motto of Lord Somers, *esse quam videri*, — "to be, rather than to seem"! How many disappointments and heart-burnings would be spared, if men could be persuaded that one can never long cheat the world regarding his merits; that, despite all tricks and devices, he can prove himself to be only what he actually is! If a man lacks genius, knowledge, goodness, courtesy, or any other desirable thing, he is continually betraying the fact by his arduous make-believes as fatally as if he babbled it in his sleep. It oozes out in tone, in look, in



act, — by a thousand unguarded apertures. Let a man be noble, and his work will have the stamp of nobility. Every great achievement, artistic or literary, political or philanthropic, must be born out of a great atmosphere. The artist who would produce noble work must live nobly, — in the atmosphere of ideas, and not in that of the marketplace. The preacher who would induce his hearers to be spiritually-minded and self-sacrificing, must be spiritual and self-sacrificing himself.

*Qualis homo talis oratio* has a larger application than Erasmus gave to it. As the latent disposition of an author peeps through his words in spite of himself, and vulgarity, malignity, or littleness of soul is betrayed by the very phrases and images of its opposites, so every other work of a man is the faithful mirror of his nature, — the reverberation of the soul itself, the outcome of all his mental and moral qualities. That thoughtful writer, Samuel Bailey, has justly said that in a long tissue of sentiment and reasoning, the real properties of the mind cannot fail to manifest themselves. A mean, hypocritical, servile spirit can no more assume, through a long investigation, the moral carriage of the liberal, the candid, the upright, the noble, than it can produce in itself the feelings by which they are animated. No art, however great, will suffice to suppress certain infallible symptoms of what lurks beneath the surface, while it will be utterly incapable of counterfeiting, because unconscious of, many other indications universally attending the qualities which command our admiration or esteem.

An experienced counsellor once told R. W. Emerson that he never feared the effect upon a jury of a plea by a lawyer who does not believe in his heart that his client ought

to have a verdict in his favor. If he does not believe it, his unbelief will appear to the jury, despite all his protestations, and will become their unbelief. That which we do not believe we cannot adequately say, though we may repeat the words ever so often. A great orator sometimes wonders that his most masterly effort fails to impress his fellow-men. The secret of his failure may be revealed in the admirable words of Odysseus to Euryalus in the eighth book of the Odyssey: —

“There is again  
One who in force may match the Immortal Gods,  
But on whose speech no crown of beauty rests;  
And such art thou. Surely, no God himself  
Could fashion thee more fairly; but thy mind  
Is base and grovelling.”

**Daniel Webster's Rôles.** THE ignorance sometimes betrayed by educated or titled Englishmen regarding certain well-known facts of literature or history, is almost incredible. Lord Kenyon, one of England's chief-justices, used to speak of “Julian, the Apostle;” and men of the same country, who have moved in its higher circles of society, have referred to Hyde and Clarendon, of the Charles' time, as two different persons.

When, in conversing with a graduate of the University of Cambridge, — the rector of an English church in Worcester, whom we met with in Paris, — we made some allusion to Sir Thomas Browne's writings, he petrified us with the query: “Sir Thomas Browne! *Who is he?*” But marvelous as are these self-exposures, they are altogether eclipsed by an observation made by an English nobleman to our late minister at the court of St. James, Mr. Phelps. “Is it not very remarkable,” said the nobleman, “that Mr. Web-

ster, who was a great American statesman and orator, should have compiled a leading dictionary of the English language, and also have been hanged for murder?"

**Adieu to Romance!** WHAT a hard, practical, utilitarian world ours is fast becoming! During the last two centuries the Real has been steadily asserting itself to the exclusion of the Ideal; investigation has set narrower and narrower bounds to romance, and fancy has been rendered ridiculous. From physic, science has swept away alchemy, incantation, and cure by the royal touch; from divinity, it has banished exorcism, purgatory, and excommunication; from law, the trial by battle, the ordeal by hot ploughshares and by touch, and the mysterious confessions of witchcraft. If poetry is not wholly dead among us, it is not because it has not suffered from many disenchantments. No Una to-day "makes a sunshine in the shady place;" no Narcissus admires his own beauty in the limpid stream; nor does any Proteus lead his flock out of the foamy seas, or "old Triton blow his wreathed horn." The "Fatal Sisters" of Gray have dissolved in thin air; Shakespeare's witches have vanished forever from "the blasted heath;" and Robin Hoods and Rob Roys have fled affrighted before sheriffs and the county police.

"When science from creation's face  
Enchantment's veil withdraws,  
What lovely visions yield their place  
To cold material laws!"

The rainbow, — whose sacred sign "the world's gray fathers" came forth to watch after the deluge, and of which a great poet tells us that his "heart leaps up" whenever he beholds it in the sky, —

“An awful rainbow once in heaven, —  
We know her woof, her texture : she is given  
In the dull catalogue of human things ;”

and Echo, no longer a vagrant classic nymph, is compelled quietly to succumb to the laws of acoustics. The blazing open fire, which once sent its dancing lights through the sitting-room, warming the heart as well as the body, has given place to the gloomy air-tight stove, the sickening steam-pipe, and the unhealthy furnace. The beacon-flames which, lighted from hill-top to hill-top, — flashing from the rocks of “Hermes-hallowed Lemnos” to “Jove-crowned Athos,” from Cithæron’s peak to the sea-beaten cliffs of Megaris, — announced the taking of Troy and the return of Agamemnon, have been exchanged for swifter but less poetic modes of communication. “Tidings fit to convulse all nations must henceforth travel by culinary process ; and the trumpet that once announced from afar the laurelled mail, heart-shaking when heard screaming on the wind, and advancing through the darkness to every village or solitary house on its route, has now given way forever to the pot-walloping of the boiler !” So wrote De Quincey some forty years ago ; but already time, which “antiquates antiquity,” has banished steam conveyance, and it has given place to the electric telegraph and the telephone.

The influence of the moon on the weather, and the “equinoctial storms,” which till recently were the terror of voyagers on the Atlantic, have received their death-blow from the hand of science. The mystery which once hung about the world’s wonders has been swept away. The cedars of Lebanon, after braving the storms of a thousand if not thousands of years, have bowed their stately tops to the axe ; the ruins of old Tyre have been converted



into fish-stores; the *disjecta membra* of the Propylæ and the Parthenon have been converted into hovels; and, but for the eloquent dissuasions of a European, the stately and impressive monuments of Luxor and Cheops would long ago have been metamorphosed by Mehemet Ali into materials for a canal. The curiosities of the Royal Burg Museum of Nuremberg — a collection embracing the accumulations of centuries — have been knocked down to the highest bidder by the auctioneer's hammer; and the leaning tower of Pisa, one of the memorable "seven wonders of the world," at the picture of which in our school geography we once gazed with childish astonishment, is to be sold, or has been sold, by lottery. Travel, robbed of all its difficulties and dangers, is robbed also of its excitement and charm. A railway is projected to the top of the Jungfrau; the shrill whistle of the locomotive is already heard from Jaffa to Jerusalem; a line of steamboats will soon be running on the Sea of Galilee, also one of horse-cars from Cairo to the Pyramids; and an elevator (*horresco referens!*) will take the modern effeminate traveller to the top of those once mysterious and awe-inspiring but now vulgarized piles. As to poetry, we see its doom foretold in the speculative thought, the subjective idiosyncrasies, the metaphysical analyses, the sphinxian riddles, and the dreamy monologues and parentheses of the over-intellectual and self-conscious Robert Browning. The days of the "Tempest" and "Midsummer Night's Dream" have fled, never to return. As Dion Boucicault observed some time ago in one of his felicitous contributions to the North American Review: "The whole world is plotted out and turned into real estate. The Island of Prospero is a thriving settlement; and if Rosalind should trespass into the



forest of Ardennes, a sturdy keeper would take her into custody."

**Ptyalism.** AMONG the offences against "the linen decencies" of society, one of the most common in this country is the practice of *spit, spit, spitting*, which is so rife among smokers, snuffers, and chewers, especially in the South and the West. The subject is not a very dignified one, yet Henry Ward Beecher did not disdain some years ago to write against the practice, and even to denounce it from the pulpit. Willis Gaylord Clark, the accomplished poet and essayist, also wrote a vigorous and characteristic paper on "American Ptyalism." As a people, we Americans have often provoked the sarcasm of foreigners by this habit; and spit as we may at the exaggerations of travelling cockneys and cosmopolitan old women of both sexes, it must be confessed that we are the most salivating nation on the globe.

Whether the corporeal juices are more abundant in the Yankee than in the Englishman, Frenchman, German, etc., we know not; but we do know that the practice is a filthy one, and we wonder that persons who regard themselves as gentlemen, and who are scrupulously delicate and cleanly in other respects, should addict themselves to it. It is perhaps folly to hope for a reformation so long as the Virginia weed retains its despotism over the nation; yet it is enough to make Nestor himself "show his teeth i' the way of smile" to hear the frequent eloquent declamations on woman's influence, and especially on the chivalrous devotion, the profound homage shown to her in this country, considering that with all her charms she cannot win away her worshipper from the witchery of tobacco. Think

of the disagreeable sensations, the nausea, and sickness even which she is made to experience by her professed adorer through the inhaling of cigar-smoke on the street, in the horse-car, and even in her own home! Think of a man's pretending to love his wife who compels her, whenever she would kiss him, to place her chaste, pouting lips, "like two young rose-leaves torn," in contact with what by courtesy may be called the mouth of a man, but in reality is nothing better than a damp tobacco-box!

While we thus acknowledge a lack of refinement, in one particular, in a considerable class of Americans, we must at the same time express our belief that among all the authors of this country, and *a fortiori* among all the poets, not one could be found who would spit out his indignation upon an offender, fancied or real, in such abuse as that which Robert Browning wreaked upon verse recently in the "London Athenæum." Mr. Fitzgerald, an English author, having thanked God in a book of his that "we should have no more 'Aurora Leighs,'" Mr. Browning chose to misrepresent him as saying that he thanked God that Mrs. Browning was dead (an utterly different thing), and wrote, after half-a-dozen lines introducing the misstatement, the following:—

"Ay, dead! and were yourself alive, good Fitz,  
How to return you thanks would task my wits.  
Kicking you seems the common lot of curs,  
While more appropriate greeting lends you grace;  
Surely to spit there glorifies your face,—  
Spitting from lips once sanctified by hers!"

Rage is not nice in its choice of language; but we doubt if the rage of any other bard or bardling in ancient or in modern times, *irritabile genus* though Horace confesses

the race to be, ever before was so impotently coarse in its manifestation, labored under such an incapacity to express itself, descended to such a depth of vulgarity and bathos, or made such havoc of syntax, as does the wrath of the sphinxian author of "Sordello" in this instance. All his ice-cold metaphysical conceits, mysticism, affectation, obscurity, and utter incomprehensibility are excusable in comparison.

The intimation of Mr. Browning that he would spit in the face of "good Fitz" but for the unlucky circumstance that he would thus glorify it, suggests the question whether such a mode of expressing resentment is ever justifiable. If it ever be so (which we do not believe), it must be when, under circumstances of extreme exasperation, a man would express toward some brute in human form, some hateful oppressor of the weak or other miscreant, the utmost loathing, scorn, and defiance of which a human being is capable. Bulwer, in his "England and the English," speaks of a creature of this sort, under the name of Sneak (one Westmacott, a common libeller), in this indignant phrase: "His soul rots in his profession, and you spit when you hear his name!" Who does not instinctively pardon — nay, almost feel impressed with a sense of grandeur in — Rebecca's answer in "Ivanhoe," when the lustful Templar Brian de Bois-Guilbert invades her in her tower to compass her dishonor? Standing on the parapet, ready to spring from that dizzy height into the courtyard below, she exclaims to the craven knight, with a look of withering, ineffable contempt: "I spit at thee, — I defy thee! Thanks to him who reared this dizzy tower so high, I fear thee not. Advance one step nearer my person, and I will plunge, to be crushed out of the very form of humanity,

into the deep beneath!" One can almost hear the scornful saliva darting from the curled lips of the Jewess, and cannot but hope that it may lodge on the brazen image of her enemy.

Rebecca is not the first woman who is recorded as having vented her scorn in this way. When Ravenna, the capital of Italy, was surrendered after a long siege, in A. D. 538, by Vitiges, the Gothic commander, to Belisarius, who marched in triumph through the streets of the city, the wives of the tall and robust Goths were so indignant that they spat in the faces of their husbands, sons, and brothers, and bitterly reproached them for betraying their dominion and freedom to these enemies, — enemies both contemptible in their numbers and diminutive in their stature.

In conclusion, we ask, Does not a man who is addicted to the practice on which we have commented, deserve to be *spitted* by an editor's pen; and can he, upon the most charitable construction of the laws of etiquette, *expect-to-rate* at this day as a gentleman?

**A Tall Man's Troubles.** THE inconveniences of an immoderately tall stature we have often heard discoursed upon by men whose altitude towered aloft, but never more pathetically than by an aged bachelor friend of ours who stands six-feet-four in his "stocking-feet." It is to this melancholy "fixed fact" — this sad, insuperable calamity that overtook him between the ages of fourteen and twenty — that he attributes his wretched condition of single blessedness. Four times has he fallen on his knees (the *ne plus ultra* of humble affection), and offered himself to as many chosen ones of his heart! Four times has he been jeeringly refused!



The first girl at whose feet he prostrated himself — a gay, laughing, roguish little witch of eighteen — begged him to pick himself up immediately; “it must be very inconvenient, if not even painful,” she said, “for one who is so long-legged to lie in that position.” She was proud of the affection of one who *stood so high* in the world; but being unambitious in her views, and preferring an humble, obscure station in life to courting the world’s gaze, she “respectfully” declined his proposals.

The second girl, who unluckily was as diminutive a Hebe as the first, expressed much ironical sorrow for her unhappy fate, but it was plain at a glance that they did not *match*; and besides, she was extremely sensitive to cold during the winter, and therefore very partial to small, low-posted rooms, which would, if she married *him*, deprive her of her dear husband’s society till spring.

His third *amica* excused herself by saying that she thought husbands and wives ought to walk arm-in-arm in the streets, which in *their* case would be manifestly impossible. Besides, she would be unable to accept his hand at the marriage ceremony, without mounting a stool, — and that would be *so* ludicrous!

The fourth and last of his “*dulcineas*” — a servant-girl, to whom in sheer despair he offered himself as his last chance, ere he verged into the “sere and yellow leaf” of confirmed celibacy — returned him an answer more cutting than all the previous ones. Making a very low courtesy, and putting on a look of extreme humility, she replied, with malicious affectation, that she was but a mean body, a poor servant-girl, and could not possibly think of *looking so high*!



**Coats, New and Old.**      WHAT a luxury is an old coat, — such, for example, as the warm, brown one in which I am now writing! What a pity that coats have to be new, and consequently stiff and unfamiliar, before they can be old, easy, and delightful! I pity a man in a new coat. No matter what sartorial skill may have been lavished upon its cut and make-up; no matter how it may gratify its wearer's pride, — he betrays his uneasiness in it every moment that he sits or walks. At home he is uncomfortable, and abroad he is perpetually haunted by a consciousness of his new apparel. If he is a literary man, in vain will he try to concentrate his ideas on any subject, — to bury himself for a time in thoughtful abstraction. A sudden pinch in the elbow dispels a brown study; a hard squeeze in the waist recalls him from the fine frenzy of the poet to the knight of the shears; Snip's goose vanquishes Anacreon's dove. The great secret of happiness is the ability to merge one's self in the contemplation of grand or uplifting objects; but this a new coat utterly forbids. To be enslaved by one's superiors is bad enough; but to be shackled by the ninth part of man, to be the helot of a tight fit, to feel like a chicken trussed for the spit, to be at the mercy of the scavenger and the street-sweeper, to dread a sudden shower or a fall of snow, to forego the refreshment of an arm-chair slumber, are miseries of which only the wearer of a new coat has constant and vivid experience.

How different from all this are one's experiences of an old coat! It is like an old acquaintance. However stiff it may have been at your first introduction to it, time sets you perfectly at ease with it; all ceremony is banished, and an accidental breach is quickly repaired. If you have travelled with it, scenes of beauty and of grandeur — the White

Mountain Notch, the Yosemite, the Rigi, Lake Como, St. Gothard's Pass, Homburg, Rothenburg, the Walhalla, and a hundred other places — have left something of themselves in its folds. It has been your companion in sunshine and in storm, in joy and in sorrow, till its very blemishes, its tears and stains, are dear to you; it has become like that centaur's tunic which could not be torn off without carrying away the flesh and blood of its wearer. Its warp is woven out of foreign joys, and its woof out of home affections.

An old coat is equally favorable to retirement and to learning, for when your coat is old, and has lost all pretensions to starch and buckram, you feel no inclination to gadding or dissipation; while, as we have already intimated, you cannot study, meditate, or compose in a new coat, any more than in a strait-waistcoat. Then, again, what an apt symbol of sociality is an old coat! What a unique impersonation of comfort! What a flood of dear and delightful memories it conjures up! It speaks of quiet and seclusion, — long flowing curtains, a drowsy arm-chair, a nicely-trimmed lamp, a ruddy fire sending its dancing flames over a snug sitting-room, a bubbling and loud-hissing tea-kettle "sending up its steamy column," a flute, and, above all, of a volume of Izaak Walton or Sir Thomas Browne or Montaigne or Xavier de Maistre, that holds you spell-bound by its enchantment within the magic circle which the hand of genius can so effectually trace.

**Calmness under Provocation.** ONE of the greatest blessings which a man can possess — especially if he is a public man — is an imperturbable temper. It is a remarkable fact that those who have most signally manifested

this virtue have been men who were constitutionally irritable. Such was the case with Washington, whose habitual composure, the result of strenuous self-discipline, was so great that it was supposed to be due to a cold and almost frigid temperament. By nature a violently passionate man, he triumphed so completely over his frailty as to be cheated of all credit for his coolness amid exasperating trials. The Duke of Wellington, also naturally irritable in the extreme, early schooled himself to calmness and self-possession under trying circumstances; he was never known to be unduly excited, or to lose his temper on the field of battle. Brialmont, his Belgian biographer, tells us that at Waterloo, in the most critical moments, the duke gave his orders in a subdued tone, and that under insult and ignominious treatment he was as stoical as an Indian chief.

One of the coolest and most self-possessed of politicians or statesmen was Prince Talleyrand, who was naturally quick-tempered and excitable, yet by assiduous effort schooled himself into an imperturbability of soul which proved of signal advantage to him as a politician and a diplomatist. History hardly furnishes a finer exhibition of this self-control than that which he manifested on a memorable occasion when insulted by Napoleon. Having acted in an important matter, when he was Napoleon's minister, contrary to the latter's wishes though according to his own best judgment, he was assailed by the Emperor in a crowded state assemblage with the most violent language, accompanied by furious gesticulations and flourishes of the fist, — so that, to avoid being struck, Talleyrand was obliged to retreat step by step before the angry and advancing monarch, until the wall prevented farther recession; yet not by

the slightest sign, by word or flush or gesture, did this master of himself betray the least emotion. On another occasion, — of which M. Molé, who was present, gave an account to Sir Henry Bulwer, — at the end of a Council of State, in 1814, the Emperor burst into some violent exclamations of his being surrounded by treachery and traitors, and then, turning to M. de Talleyrand, abused him for ten minutes in the most outrageous language. The prince, who stood by the fire all the time, guarding himself from the heat by his hat, never moved a limb or a feature. “Any one who had seen him,” says M. Molé, “would have supposed that he was the last man in the room to whom the Emperor could be speaking; and finally, when Napoleon, slamming the door violently, departed, Talleyrand quietly took the arm of M. Mollien, and, with apparent unconsciousness, limped downstairs. On reaching his home, he sent a dignified letter to the Emperor offering his resignation, which, however, was not accepted.”

How much of the unpopularity of John Adams and his consequent failures as a statesman were due to his lack of self-control, to his irascible temper and waspish tongue! How many of the miseries of literary men of genius have been due to the same cause! How savagely impatient was Swift of the slightest contradiction! What a headstrong, overbearing, quarrelsome man of genius was Walter Savage Landor! “A Tartarean broil of bitter quarrels” with his tenants and neighbors drove him, in 1815, from England to Italy, where, during a residence of twenty years, his hot temper involved him in frequent disputes with officials and others; and in 1835 an irreconcilable quarrel with his wife drove him back to England. Even to his few friends he was so exacting and “touchy” that they were liable at any



moment, it is said, to strike against a torpedo that might make an irreparable breach. How sadly again, in our own day, was Carlyle's mighty mind marred by his waspish temper and his boorishness; and how much more resplendent would have been the lustre of Ruskin's brilliant genius, had it not been obscured by his brusqueness and irritability!

If great military commanders and statesmen need to cultivate patience and imperturbability of temper, how much more so does the Christian who would win victories for Christ! If, again, "temper," as Bishop Wilson has said, "is nine tenths of Christianity," or if, as Dr. Chalmers has affirmed, "heaven is a temper, not a place," what hope of happiness or heaven can the man of excitable, fiery nature have who does not strive, by ceaseless self-discipline, to convert the fire into a central glow and motive-power of life, instead of suffering it to waste, or worse than waste, itself in volcanic explosions?

**Getting into Harness.** WITH the advance of cool weather, persons who have been resting from toil in the summer undergo a dreary trial, which they secretly dread for days or weeks. They have been "out at grass," and have come back to the stable. They are inwardly chafing, perhaps groaning, as they feel the harness pressing against the old places, and rubbing against old sores that had nearly healed, but now make themselves felt again, with less painful but real distinctness. In vain do they wince and fret and sigh for the idyllic retreats, the cool, shady nooks, where they forgot the "carking cares," the dreary drudgeries, the teasing vexations of their ordinary life. They know that for ten months or more they will be tread-



ing in the old monotonous mill-horse round, with the old wearinesses of body and depressions of spirit; and they cannot help exclaiming, *Cui bono?* Is this life of routine, of never-ending drudgery, the life for which man with his fiery energies, his lofty aspirations, his consciousness of fitness for nobler things, was designed?

While such are the repinings of some returned absentees, others — probably the great majority — come home from the mountain and the sea-side feeling like “eagles newly baited,” or giants refreshed with wine, rioting in the consciousness of newly-gained strength, and eager for the fray of the courts, the fight with disease, the competition of the mart, or the contest of the stock-exchange. A life all play, all rest even in the downiest nest, would be to them one of intolerable *ennui*. Better, a thousand times better, they think, to drudge at the grimiest toil than swing in the hammock of laziness and doze life away! Better for the horse to draw its loads, even in a chafing harness, with the zest which they give to its respites from toil, than to suffer from a ceaseless surfeit of idleness and clover!

**Room to Swing a Cat.** A GOOD anecdote is told of a celebrated English divine, that, being visited one morning in his study, he was asked by a friend, —

“Doctor, why do you sit in such a little place as this? You have not room to swing a cat!”

“I do not want to swing a cat, sir,” was the reply.

What volumes of philosophy are comprehended in this answer! Wisdom can teach few lessons of greater utility than not to desire what we do not or cannot possess. The true secret of happiness lies, after all, not so much in

gratifying our desires as in conforming them to our actual situation. It is the longing, restless desire to attain something out of reach that makes so many lives miserable. It is said of an ancient philosopher, that, on beholding the splendors of a great palace, he cried out, "How many things there are here that Diogenes does not want!" How few persons thus distinguish between the desirable things of life and its actual needs! How many sacrifice health, ease, and happiness (all that makes life worth living), and go on all their days "piercing themselves with many sorrows," for the sake of riches which they cannot need and will never use, but are only heaping up, as Pope says, "to spout through a spendthrift heir!" Truly did Izaak Walton say that "there be as many miseries beyond riches as on this side of them;" yet none will believe so till they have learned by experience; and unless they have "*room* to swing a cat," whether they want to do so or not, all are more or less wretched.

**Sincere**      A good story was told us some years ago  
**Milk.**      by an eminent New York Baptist preacher, just deceased, — Dr. Armitage, — who was a member of the American Bible Union, and an earnest advocate of a new translation of the Scriptures. He was taking tea one evening, in a town "out West," at the house of a Baptist sister who was opposed to such a translation, and who, when he spoke of the necessity of substituting new words for certain ones in the King James version that had become obsolete or had changed in meaning, replied that she had never found any difficulty in understanding the words of the current version, — their meaning was always perfectly clear to her. The good doctor, her guest, made no

answer, turned the conversation to other topics, and by-and-by said quietly: "I'll thank you, Madam, for a glass of sincere milk." The lady stared, looked puzzled, and finally, thinking she could not have understood him, begged him to repeat his request. The doctor had no sooner complied than she exclaimed, "*Sincere* milk! Pray, what kind of milk is that? I don't think I've ever heard of that before." "Why, Madam," was the reply, "we read in the current version of the Bible, don't we, of 'the *sincere milk* of the word;' and did you not say, just now, that you had no difficulty in apprehending the meaning of any of its words?"

**Labor Pays.** ANOTHER distinguished preacher told us some years ago that he once spent four weeks of hard labor upon a sermon, which when preached, so far as he could see, made no impression upon his hearers. No one ever spoke to him about it, or even indirectly alluded to it, and he felt that his effort was *omnis effusus labor*. Not long afterwards his time was so taken up one week with other duties that Saturday night, and even Sunday morning, found him with no sermon written. Going to the church at the hour for service, he stepped into the pulpit, made a prayer, gave out a hymn, and while the choir and congregation were singing, turned over the leaves of his Bible for a text. When the time came for him to preach, he extemporized as well as he could a discourse upon a subject which he had neither chosen nor thought of till after he entered the house. When he had come down from the pulpit, two deacons approached him and expressed their profound gratification with the sermon, — one of them, with a significant look, saying to the other, "Well, *that* sermon

cost our pastor *four weeks' hard labor, at least*, you may be certain;" to which the other assented. "You make me mad," said the preacher. "Why? Because we have told you how much we liked your sermon?" "The reason is this," replied the pastor. "Some time ago I *did* preach to you a sermon which had cost me four weeks' hard labor, and you never said a word about it. To-day I deliver an impromptu sermon, of which the subject and text were not thought of till after I entered the pulpit, and you are in raptures."

"Well, Doctor," said we, after hearing his statement, "you have had abundant compensation for the labor spent upon the first sermon. It was only because you usually took pains, and occasionally extraordinary pains, with your sermons, that you were able to edify your hearers so greatly when you preached without preparation. Had you always extemporized, you would have heard as little said of the second sermon as was said of the first," — all which the good Doctor knew as well as, and better than, we.

**A Happy Toast.** Few things that seem so easy are so difficult of execution as the production of a good toast. A man may have the most brilliant abilities for any other kind of intellectual effort, — he may have genius enough to write a good poem, play, novel, oration, or state paper, — and yet be utterly incompetent to write a good toast. Two things are essential to a felicitous toast, — brevity and point. A telling toast is always conveyed in a sentence. Two are sure to spoil it. It must be also a flash of inspiration, the fancy of the moment. Elaboration, the use of the file, midnight oil, are as fatal to it as frost to the rosebud.



Such a toast was that given some forty years or more ago by a militia captain, at the suggestion of Erastus Root, at a Fourth of July celebration in New York. The captain had been toasted and called upon for a response, when he rose and proposed the following: "*The Militia of the United States: may they never want — and — and — and.*" Here he stuck fast, and could not add a word more, though an empire's fate should depend upon it. At this critical moment General Root, who sat by his side, touched his shoulder, and whispered in his ear, "*And may they never be wanted!*" The captain was saved. Catching instantly at his friend's suggestion, he joined the two parts of a sentence; and with an air of triumph, as if he had never for a moment floundered, he gave his sentiment thus: "The Militia of the United States: may they never want, and may they never be wanted!"

Admirable sentiment! One might spend years in his closet, and fail to hit upon one so pithy and so good.

**Omnis Effusus Labor.** A DEMOCRATIC Southern friend who keenly relishes a joke even at his own expense, once told me an amusing story of one of the electioneering canvasses in which he was often engaged. In company with two or three friends he traversed, during a hot political campaign, one or two counties in Tennessee in behalf of a candidate for Congress, and one day came to the house of a farmer who was "shucking" corn. Volunteering their assistance, our friend and his companions threw off their coats, and "pitched into" the corn, — at the same time stripping off the husks and urging the claims of their party candidate. Two or three hours passed, during which they worked like beavers, and the perspiration ran from



their faces in streams; but the farmer listened so attentively, and finally signified so unequivocally his assent to what they had said, that they felt abundantly compensated, — they were sure that his vote was won. Judge of their feelings, when, the entire pile of corn having been “shucked,” he addressed them as follows: “Gentlemen, I am greatly obliged by your assistance, for which I heartily thank you, and should be most happy to vote for your candidate; but, unfortunately, I do not live in his Congressional district. *My house is just this side of the line.*”

“Turn thy complexion there,  
Patience, thou young and rose-lipped cherubin!”

**Pulpit Elocution.** WHAT is the chief need of the pulpit to-day? Is it profound scholarship, hair-splitting metaphysical subtlety, rhetorical skill, a firmly accentuated conscience, the moral aroma of character, or oratorical skill and power? Of course, Divine inspiration is necessary to the truest pulpit power; but inspiration works through human instruments, and of these we believe the one for which there is the most crying want to-day is that last named.

Till within a few years the art of public speaking has been treated by our theological seminaries with comparative neglect. In many to-day it receives either no attention, or an attention not at all commensurate with its vital importance. The newly-fledged graduate is generally well versed in ecclesiastical history, and knows all the shades of religious opinion, ancient, mediæval, and modern. He can tell you who Novatus was, and who Novatian. He can tell you to a nicety the difference between the Homoousians

and the Homoiousians, Pelagians and Semi-Pelagians, Monophysites and Monothelites, Jansenists and Molinists. He has explored all the transactions of the Councils of Nice, Chalcedon, Trent, and Dort; he can give you a minute history of all the controversies that have vexed the peace of the Church, recite the sixteen articles of the Priscillian Creed, and tell you whether *filioque* is properly in the creed of the Latin church, and what was the precise heresy of Eutyches. But while the graduate has been cramming his head with knowledge, he has never once learned how to make a telling use of that knowledge. In his anxiety to pack his brain with history, Hebrew, and exegesis, he has not learned to communicate the results of his erudition in a fascinating or, at least, in an unforbidding way.

Of what use is learning to a preacher if he communicate its results to his hearers in squeaking tones that grate on their ears, or in a drawling sing-song voice that puts them to sleep? What matters it that a sermon has been written with burning tears in the study, if it be struck with the coldness of death in the pulpit; if he who a few hours before was alive in every fibre, is now transformed into a marble statue? What matters it that a soldier has a sword of the finest temper, the keenest edge, and the most dazzling finish, if he has never learned the art of thrust and parry, — the art of fence?

A newspaper correspondent who heard some years ago an address read by Dr. Orville Dewey, wrote: "And such reading! Quiet and unpretentious, but with such appropriate feeling and intense expressiveness! I was not prepared for such a really powerful essay, with so little show of power. I better understand the mightiness of the still,

small voice, and recognize an oratory in condensed feeling and subdued tones, greater than the most showy rhetoric and the stormiest bluster." What a pity it is that we have so few such readers in our pulpits! A prevailing fault of preaching is that it is too declamatory; it needs to be more conversational. There would be a positive gain of power, if the preacher would simply talk to his hearers as a man talks to his friend. Who that ever heard the silver-tongued Wendell Phillips does not remember how great was his surprise on first listening to that incomparable speaker? You were looking for a man who was all art, all thunder. "Lo! a quiet man glided on to the platform, and began talking in a simple, easy, conversational style. Presently he made you smile at some happy turn; then he startled you by a rapier-like thrust; then he electrified you by a grand outburst of feeling. You listened, believed, applauded. And that was Wendell Phillips. That was also oratory, — to produce the greatest effect by the quietest means."

We cannot all be Phillipses; but we can copy his naturalness, earnestness, and simplicity; and what a gain would that be to the great majority of preachers! The fault of many is, not that they cannot read Greek or Hebrew, but that they cannot read English. A story is told of an old Scotchwoman, who one day gave her grandson the newspaper to read, telling him to read it aloud. The only reading which the boy was accustomed to hear was at the parish kirk, and he began to read in exactly the same tones in which he had heard the minister read. Shocked at the boy's irreverence, the old lady gave him a box on the ear, and exclaimed: "What! dost thou read the newspapers with the Bible twang?" Oh, that Bible twang! Is

there anything which so kills the power of the pulpit? As the best music badly played makes wretched melody, so false and spiritless elocution degrades the finest composition to a level with the worst. On the other hand, by sonorous depth and melodious cadences of voice, even the most trivial sentiments may be invested with a force and fascination that are almost irresistible.

The poet Dryden used to read his own plays so badly as almost to emasculate them; while his friend, Nat Lee, delivered very poor poems with such spirit and taste that a player threw aside his part in despair of acting up to the recital of the author. Hugh Miller tells us that when one of his own compositions was read to him by Dr. Chalmers, he was astonished at its excellence; it produced the effect of the most consummate acting; the author had never dreamed how fine it was before. To what but the absence or presence of the magic of manner shall we attribute the fact that some of the ablest and most scholarly discourses — discourses which when read seem full of “reason permeated and made red-hot with passion” — have fallen powerless from the lips of their authors, while a few verses of Scripture, coming from the lips of another man, have acted like an electric shock, “tearing and shattering the heart,” to use De Quincey’s words, “with volleying discharges, peal after peal”?

When Whitefield was in this country, some of the ablest sermons by his contemporaries were heard with apparent apathy, while Dr. Franklin was held spell-bound by the great Methodist preacher, even when his sentiments were the tritest, through the aptness of his gestures and the exquisite modulations of voice which gave its appropriate utterance to every word. So with the preaching of Sum-



merfield. When this accomplished preacher began sweeping the people of Philadelphia on the tide of his eloquence, the clergy of New York came together for deliberation on the phenomenon, and decided to send Dr. McAuley to the former city to learn the secret of Summerfield's power. When the doctor returned, they met again to hear his report, which was this: "It is not because he says anything new that he draws and thrills such multitudes; it is not because he says anything that I have not said a hundred times; but because *he says it so much better.*"

Let no one fancy that it detracts from such a preacher's genius, to say that his power lies far less in what he says than in the way he says it. It is saying only that his weapon can be wielded by no other hand than his own. When Mirabeau's friend complained that the National Assembly would not listen to him, that fiery leader asked for his speech, and the next day electrified that body by uttering as his own the words they had refused to hear from another. "The words were the same; the force and the fire that made them thrilling and electric were not his friend's, but his own."

**Have the** "No," says Renan; "they lack, almost  
**Jews** utterly, curiosity and the faculty of laughter."  
**Humor?**

This, if overstated, is substantially true. The Jew has some wit and some humor, but they are not spontaneous, irrepressible, — not the result of an exuberance of animal spirits. There is an undercurrent of sadness even in his mirth, a tincture of melancholy even in his taunts and bursts of irony. Laughter is rarely mentioned in the Bible as the outcome of a merry temper, of hilarity of spirit; it is almost always an expression of



triumphant self-complacency, of derision and scorn, and its end is said to be "heaviness." There is a grim humor in the mocking exclamation of Elijah to the prophets of Baal, when they vainly cried to him on Mount Carmel; and, again, an exquisite pleasantry in Isaiah's description of the manufacture of an idol from a tree. Even Heine's humor, with all its weird fancies, wild fun, and airy riot, was nearly all of a cynical, mocking kind; as, for instance, when he tells us he might settle in England "if it were not that I should find there two things, — coal-smoke and Englishmen, and I cannot abide either;" and again, when, commenting on the fate of Herr Saalfeld, a professor at Göttingen (a great seat, Heine thought, of pedantry and Philistinism), who had written angry pamphlets against Napoleon, the humorist says: "It is curious, the three greatest enemies of Napoleon have all perished miserably. Castlereagh cut his own throat; Louis XVIII. rotted upon his throne; and Professor Saalfeld is still a professor at Göttingen."

**Bells.** WHILE spending a summer in Waterville, Me.,

I saw one day on the ground, near the Universalist church, the bell which for over sixty years had summoned the worshippers to its service, and which had been taken down on account of a fatal crack. It is not, perhaps, sufficiently known that bells should be examined, from time to time, to ascertain how much they have been worn at the parts struck by the hammers. If a considerable indentation has been made, the bell should be rehung, and turned a quarter round, so as to present a fresh surface to the action of the hammer. Some good bells (including the one noticed above probably) have been cracked

without any extra or violent use, simply by being struck and worn out at only two places.

Is not the same thing true of men? Do not they too, when their minds are struck day after day, year after year, with a wearisome ding-dong, at the same points, by the same hard and narrow idea (especially if there is much brass in their mental composition), often become *cracked*? Are not many of the tenants of our insane hospitals and lunatic asylums men who have been struck and dominated all their lives by one ponderous thought, — some scheme, perhaps, for reforming the world, or uprooting a mighty evil, — which has been hammered upon their brains monotonously and exclusively, till their *pia mater*, struck continually in the same place, has at last been rent asunder? Diversity in the thoughts presented is as necessary to the soundness of the mind, as diversity in the points presented to the hammer is to the soundness of a bell.

**Reconversion of a Duke.** THE history of the plucky little Dutch Republic, so vividly and dramatically related by Motley, affords many illustrations of Shakespeare's saying that "the whirligig of time brings about its revenges." When in 1577 the fortress of Antwerp, reared by the Spaniards to overawe the city, was torn down by the Dutch, the old statue of the military butcher Alva (or Alba) was discovered in a forgotten crypt, where it had lain since it had been thrown there by his successor in the government of the Netherlands, Requesens. Fancy the ecstasy of the Hollanders at this opportunity of wreaking their wrath upon the duke's "counterfeit presentment"! A thousand sledge-hammers were ready to dash it into pieces, and it was soon reduced to a shapeless mass. The

bulk of it was melted again, and reconverted, by a most natural metamorphosis, by a most happy poetic justice, into the "cannon from which it had originally sprung.

**Long Sermons vs. Short.** It is said that the celebrated English barrister, Sir James Scarlett, being asked why he never spoke to a jury, even in the most momentous cases, more than thirty minutes, replied: "It takes just thirty minutes to lodge an idea in a juryman's mind. The average juryman's mind can hold but one idea; consequently, if I succeed in putting a second idea there, I only dislodge the first."

Is there not a thought here that preachers would do well to ponder? Is it not better for the preacher to set forth in a clear, luminous, and vivid manner a single important thought, and impress it indelibly on the hearer's memory, — to drive one nail home, and clinch it, — than by hammering for fifty minutes or an hour upon half-a-dozen ideas, to run the risk of exhausting his patience and making him forget all? Is it not as true now as in the days of Thomas Fuller, that "the memory is like a purse, — if it be overfull that it cannot shut, all will drop out"? We are aware of the reply that will spring to some preachers' lips. They will say there are subjects so vast that one could barely nibble at their edges in such discourses. But might not Scarlett have said the same of some of his great law-cases? Again, to some preachers it will seem "a small thing" to develop, illustrate, and press home, even in the most effectual manner, two ideas only in a Sunday. But is this necessarily "a small thing"? Is it a trivial matter, a mere bagatelle, to have lodged two barbed arrows of conviction in a sinner's conscience, or to have

planted two great fruitful thoughts for his instruction or consolation in the memory of the Christian? Think of the sum total at the year's end, — over a hundred ideas, each weighty and suggestive, and not hinted at or half stated, but fully unfolded, and couched in language that rivets the attention and makes them stick like burrs in the memory!

We read some years ago in a religious newspaper an account of a preacher who tried the plan which we have suggested, and with eminent success. He struck but one blow in his sermons, and that with all the might of his soul and brain. However long or fruitful his text, he so unfolded it as to bring out one and only one leading idea, which the hearer distinctly saw, and could never forget. Sometimes a single word suggested the idea which he would make prominent; and he would emphasize it and repeat it, till it was almost wrought into the very substance of the hearer's brain. Once, when preaching to a large congregation from the words of Christ, "Ye must be born again," he began his discourse with, "Oh, that inexorable **MUST!**" and then, looking at different parts of the audience, he repeated successively in thrilling tones, "**Ye MUST! ye MUST!** I speak to all who are not Christians, — ye **MUST** be born again." That "**must**" was a point which in a sermon of thirty minutes he pressed again and again, and yet again, upon the hearts and consciences of a thousand attentive hearers, many of whom at the next inquiry meeting were anxiously asking, "What must I do to be saved?" A similar sermon we once heard Newman Hall preach, in London, from the text, "What think ye of Christ?" — the deep impressiveness of which lay in the earnestness, pungency, and power with which, at brief intervals, he pressed home this inquiry.



It is easy to cry out against the degeneracy of the times, and to say that men ought to sit patiently and listen without restlessness or yawning to fifty or sixty minute sermons. It is too true that much aversion to them is the result of the increasing repugnance to anything like physical discomfort or penance which characterizes our age, and to the aversion to prolonged thought which most men feel. But inveigh as we may against the world, the flesh, and the devil, we cannot abolish any one of them; and it is utterly hopeless to try to mould the restless, impatient, fiery man of the nineteenth century into a cool imperturbable Puritan of the eighteenth. Barrow could hold his hearers two hours; but there has been but one Barrow, and even he would now preach to empty pews. It is an age of steam and electricity which we live in, not of slow coaches, — an age of locomotives, electric telegraphs, and telephones; and hence it is the cream of a speaker's thoughts that men want, the wheat and not the chaff, the kernel and not the shell; the strong, pungent essence, and not the thin, diluted mixture. There are cases where, as Hesiod says, "the half is more than the whole;" and a discourse hammered out painfully in every part is often less instructive and less persuasive than a few bright links suggestive of the entire train of thought.

Judge Story says of Theophilus Parsons, the great Massachusetts lawyer, that he never knew him to speak at the bar more than an hour, rarely above half an hour; but "what he said was like gold, bright, solid, and pure. It fell like a dead, crushing weight upon his adversary." Think of a sermon with such qualities as this! All public speakers cannot be Parsonses; but all can learn to condense like him, — to omit all but vital points, and



give the results of their thought without the processes. What the listener demands to-day is the very *apices rerum*, — the tops and sums of things reduced to their simplest expression; the drop of oil extracted from thousands of roses, and condensing all their odors; the healing power of a hundred weight of bark in a few grains of quinine. “There is no excuse for a long sermon,” says Lamont; “if it be good, it *need* not be long; and if it be bad, it *ought* not to be long.”

The day has gone by when the sermon was needed as the chief medium of instruction in religious truth. The hearer to-day needs not so much to be taught as to be reminded of that truth, and to have his heart and conscience stirred up. Few preachers have the ability to preach a long sermon which will chain the unwearied attention of their hearers, — still less, to preach a hundred such every year. It has been well said that the lineal and the cubic qualities of a sermon are likely to vary in an inverse ratio, and that if the hearer's attention be stretched over too large an area, it will be almost sure to give way at some points. The circulation is apt to become feeble in the extremities of a sermon which has more members than the thought can vitalize. “Brother,” said Whitefield to a clergyman who had made a very long prayer, “you have prayed me into a good frame of mind; and, brother, you have prayed me out of it again.” The impression which even a powerful sermon makes in the first twenty minutes may be utterly dissipated by the concluding twenty. The last state of that man is worse than the first, because he leaves his pew weary, impatient, exasperated, — a frame of mind the very opposite to that which is indispensable to the retention and germination of religious truth.

**The Art of Conversation.** WHAT a pity it is, that, among the accomplishments acquired to-day by the young, the art of conversation is so rarely included! The world is full of fine linguists and metaphysicians, masters of literature and history, “and a’ that;” but the number of those who know how to convey the knowledge they have acquired in clear, terse, suggestive language is small. Great talkers there are in abundance, — egotists, monologists, story-tellers, hobby-riders, — persons who, as the Duchess of Gordon said of Burns, can talk you off your legs, and who in their impetuous volubility do not give echo fair play; but good talkers, who are full of the “hived honey of the soul,” which they bring out at exactly the right time and place for the general good, — who hold their remark, story, or *jeu d’esprit* in check, as a skilful gillie does a deerhound, yet are ready to let it slip when the right moment comes, — who know how to build on the conversation of their companions, amplifying their illustrations, capping their allusions, and modestly supplying their deficiencies, — whose talk triumphs over deformities, and makes even ugliness agreeable, — who make you as oblivious of the lapse of time as the angel did Adam, in “Paradise Lost,” when the latter said, —

“With thee conversing, I forget all time;  
All seasons and their change, all please alike,” —

such talkers are rare, indeed.

Propriety is, of course, the first condition of good conversation, — a harmony of mind and utterance with the place, persons, and occasion; and the want of it is a glaring defect in many who would otherwise be charming talkers. They talk brilliantly of science to poets, of

banquets to dyspeptics, of big fortunes to bankrupts, and of balls to ascetics. They talk politics to women, announce sudden deaths at dinner-parties, declaim against usury to brokers, harangue upon the miseries of debt to borrowers, allude to cabbages before tailors, and crack jokes upon hemp in the houses of men who have lost friends by hanging. As *Praed* says, —

“ They make all the world reflect  
 On what it hates to recollect ;  
 They talk to misers of their heir,  
 To women of the times that were ;  
 To ruined gamblers of the box ;  
 To thin defaulters of the stocks ;  
 To poets of the wrong review,  
 And to the French of Waterloo.”

It was one of these unfortunate gentlemen who at a reception asked Lord North, —

“ Who is that uncommonly ugly lady opposite to you ? ”

“ That uncommonly ugly lady, sir, is my wife.”

“ No, my lord, I mean the one to her right.”

“ That, sir, is my daughter ! ”

A march would not be music in a church, nor an anthem music on a parade-ground. A chorus from the “ *Messiah* ” would not be more discordant in a ball-room than a waltz in a cathedral ; and none of them is more offensive when out of place or ill-timed than are the solecisms that are often committed in conversation. Therefore —

“ If your lips you ’d save from slips,  
 Five things observe with care, —  
 Of whom you speak, to whom you speak,  
 And how, and when, and where.”

**Does Marriage** “ Yes,” many persons who have been  
**“ Go by Destiny ” ?** “ unequally yoked ” will promptly reply.

Wives and husbands, they will tell you, are not chosen, else why talk of "falling in love"? No precaution, if it were taken, could assure a man against an ill-tempered wife, or a woman against a tyrannical husband; while a union contracted in the maddest haste may prove to be a linking together of spirits that are one in heart and mind, or, if two, —

"Two like the brain, whose halves ne'er think apart,  
But beat and tremble to one throbbing heart."

A courtship as long as the siege of Troy will be no guaranty against quarrels in the honeymoon; while an affection sown at an evening reception or during a walk by moonlight, of which the harvest follows in a month, may prelude a lifetime of billing and cooing, and weather all the storms of adversity. "Couples arrived at years of discretion," says a writer, "have proceeded gradually and steadily through the grammar of Love, and when duly qualified for a matrimonial degree, have advanced in the most decorous manner and after the most approved method to the altar of Hymen, Cupid and Minerva preceding them hand in hand, and a life *à la* cat and dog has been the result; while boys and girls hardly halfway in their teens have fallen in love at lawn tennis, galloped off the next morning to another town or county, been married by a justice of the peace with scarcely any form or ceremony, and thrown two entire families into hysterics, who, nevertheless, have afterward passed their youth like turtle-doves, their maturest years like the tenderest of friends, and their old age like Darby and Joan."

Such anomalies have occurred, no doubt; but of a hundred such marriages, whether hasty or deliberate, how many have had such results?



**A Popular Fallacy.** It is a popular fallacy, from which the acuteness even of Voltaire did not save him, that the finest works of the imagination are those which make the reader weep, — over which he sheds floods of tears. The truth, on the contrary, is, that the greatest dramatists and poets do not harrow the feelings either in the degree or the way that do the authors of melodramas. Neither Shakespeare nor Goethe, Æschylus nor Euripides, makes us cry; this is the achievement of writers of mediocre ability. The reason is plain. The avenue to tears is not, to use Tennyson's phrase, "through the depths of some divine despair," but through domestic sorrows; and little art is required to awaken our sympathies for *them*. To excite our compassion for a wronged husband, a bereaved and disconsolate mother, an insulted young woman, is an easy task; but to interest us in the trials of a great, noble, heroic nature, baffled by adverse circumstances, entangled in a web of hellish conspiracy, moved to its heights and depths by the incidents of fate, or perplexed by the consequences of its own actions, is infinitely more difficult, because the dramatist must make us who are on a lower level raise ourselves to the height of his great argument. The feelings which the grandest art calls forth, — the feelings which are roused by sympathy with a Lear or an Othello, — must have in them as much admiration as sorrow. They are the emotions we feel when Priam says to Achilles: "And I have endured what earthly man hath never endured, that I should put to my lips the hand of him who slew my son." They are the feelings with which, in a diminished degree, we read the words of Chateaubriand, an old man of eighty, dying amid the tumult of the revolution of February (1848):



“ Mon Dieu, mon Dieu ! quand donc, quand donc serai-je délivré de tout ce monde, ce bruit ; quand donc cela finira-t-il ? ”

**Vulgarity.** Is there any other moral quality which adheres to a man like vulgarity ? “ Once vulgar always vulgar ” is a rule that holds true of the great vulgar and the small. What is more common than for not only individuals, but whole families, to be distinguished from others, independently of wealth and station, by a general nobility of mind, a refinement which colors all their lives, blends with all their thoughts, feelings, and acts ? They may be in very humble circumstances, cheaply dressed, and even illiterate ; and yet you feel, the moment you meet them, that they are Nature’s gentlefolk. Who, again, has not seen other persons flaunting in all the bravery of outward gentility, yet vainly striving to acquire the humane refinement, the noble ease, the manly deference without sycophancy, the quiet self-possession and *savoir-faire*, which are at once so commanding and so winning in the well-bred man ? The truth is that there is an instinctive, inherent nobility in some men which will show itself in spite of all the disguises of poverty and beggarly habiliments ; while in other men there is an essential vulgarity which is always betraying itself, in spite of the most desperate efforts to keep the ass’s ears from protruding through the lion’s skin.

A thoroughly vulgar person, like the poet, is generally born, not made. He is vulgar in his babyhood, as a school-boy, as a young man, through manhood, through life. His coarseness clings to him from the cradle to the grave, and cannot be rubbed out or extracted by any bleaching or

tritulating process whatever. No matter how lofty the pinnacle of success or fame to which his mental gifts or good fortune may uplift him; no matter how elegant, refined, or fashionable the circles in which he may move, — vulgar he is, in his manner, his speech, his ideas; and vulgar he is doomed to remain. Never does his rusticity wear off; never does his coarse voice become fine; never does he acquire the delicate tact, the suave and pleasing manner, the natural, genial deference without hypocrisy or obtrusion, which makes one agreeable to his associates. As well might you expect to see lace ruffles made out of hemp, as hope to see such a man become refined by intercourse with good society. Nor will his descendants be less gross — at least, for several generations — than himself. “You cannot keep some people out of the kitchen,” says Hazlitt, “because their grandfathers or grandmothers came out of it. As a poor man and his wife were walking along in the neighborhood of Portland Place in London, he said to her peevishly: ‘What is the use of walking along these fine streets and squares? Let us turn down some alley!’”

But what is the cause of these phenomena? Certain it is that they have no reference to riches or poverty, to education or the lack of it, to good or bad luck in life. The Celt, whether French, Irish, or Highlander, appears to be everywhere courteous. Vulgarity has no reference, again, to what is common; for a thing may be very uncommon and very vulgar. Neither is coarseness or brutality the same thing as vulgarity. When Henry VIII. called the lord-chancellor “knave, arrant knave, and beastly fool,” and ordered him to “avaunt” out of his presence, the act was coarse, but it was not vulgar.

Vulgarity is the vice not of uncivilized life, but of a certain stage of civilization. "Its seat is not among mountains and wild pastures, but in comfortable trading-towns and cities of gay manufacturers. The very savage has noble and refined manners, compared with the mechanic and auctioneer." There is no vulgarity in the Scottish Highlander, in the wandering Arab, or in the American Indian. Fierce, revengeful they may be, but they are never vulgar. The born vulgar owe that quality to heredity; others, to the homes in which they received their earliest training. There they were ranged in childhood into their castes; there the seeds of the future character, of the whole life, were sown. Schools may develop a man's powers and store his mind with knowledge, they may put sharps and flats before his abilities; but the general tone of his life will remain more or less true to his nursery and the influences of his home.

**The Secret of Vitality.** To American politicians, who so often break down in the middle of life, nothing is more surprising than the physical and intellectual energy of Mr. Gladstone at over fourscore, in spite of the Herculean labors of his long life. What is the secret of this prolonged power? A London journal explains the enigma in part, when it tells us that he is a man who leaves his politics outside when he enters his study or bedroom door. He has the faculty "of closing at will one chamber of his mind, and opening another." Coming home from a hot and exciting debate in the House of Commons, he can in ten minutes banish all thought of it in the ardor of some fresh pursuit. Like Fénélon, who used to say, "*Le changement des études est toujours un délassement pour*

moi," the great English statesman recreates himself, not by absolute idleness, but by a change of occupation. Like Lord Burleigh, Elizabeth's great minister, — who, as Fuller tells us, used at night, when he had put off his official gown, to say, "Lie there, lord treasurer," — Gladstone can throw off the political harness, and "be merry, jocund, and pleasant" with his family, or entertain visitors, or enjoy the silent companionship of his books.

Another secret of Mr. Gladstone's octogenarian endurance and versatility is that by long habit he has acquired complete control over his inclinations, and never worries. What a saving of nervous energy does this imply, and what a contrast to the fume, fret, and distraction of our American politicians, who are so often the children of impulse, and whose tempers are ruffled by the pettiest provocation! Would that they had the Englishman's poise and self-control, and that, when chained to mental labor and unable to give the brain repose, they would try at least to vary their labors, which is another form of repose. Intense and prolonged application to one subject is the explanation of many breakdowns like that of Secretary Windom. "As your body," says a wise writer, "may be in activity during the whole of the day, if you vary the actions sufficiently, so may the brain work all day at varied occupations. Hold out a stick at arm's length for five minutes, and the muscles will be more fatigued than by an hour's rowing. The same principle holds good with the brain."

**The Secret of Longevity.** THE Boston "Herald" says: "Bismarck is out in a statement setting forth that he owes his rugged old age to the practice of bathing regu-



larly and freely in cold water. Gladstone ascribes his longevity to the simplicity and regularity of his habits. Tennyson believes that his having celebrated his eighty-first birthday is due to his not having worried or fretted over the small affairs of life. Von Moltke thinks his ripe old age is owing to temperance in all the affairs of life, and plenty of exercise in the open air. De Lesseps and Barnum think they owe their advanced years to like causes."

To these instances may be added that of Bryant, the poet, who, when asked the secret of his extraordinary health and vigor at eighty and upward, replied, "Moderation." But not one of these octogenarians has ever hinted at the main cause of his length of days, — a cause which outweighs all the others in importance; namely, a *genius* for longevity. Every one of them has (or had when living) this genius, or, as Sir Thomas Browne says, "was prefigured unto a long duration." Regular habits, cold or warm water bathing, temperance and freedom from "carking care," will prolong existence, but will never be accompanied with long life unless there is an inherited strength of organism. On the other hand, men who have the necessary inherent stamina will generally reach old age, though they often trample on the laws of health, because, though they draw more freely on their resources of vigor and vitality than other men, they began life, like the heir of a succession of rich ancestors, with a vast capital. It is owing to this predisposition, bodily and mental, to longevity, that persons have held on tenaciously to life till their ninetieth or one hundredth year, in spite of having been valetudinarians nearly all their days.



**Laconic Letters.** — It has often been remarked that letter-writing — that is, in the elaborate style of two or three generations ago — is almost a lost art. Cheap postage, the railway, the telegraph, and the telephone have nearly destroyed this elegant art, as fast stipple-punching has destroyed the beautiful but laborious art of line-engraving. In the days of our great grandfathers, there was a certain leisure which made letter-writing a natural vehicle of expression. Life was not hurried, men and women were not busied with so many things, and the fatal notion of “wasting time” did not obtrude itself so constantly as it does now, whenever active minds find themselves bestowing their precious hours on an individual, a unit only, instead of on the world in general. A letter was then a work of art, a carefully-studied composition, a thing of stately ceremony, like the dignified courtesy of the old-school manners. Before the invention of envelopes, it was a part of polite education to learn how to fold and to seal neatly the large quarto four-page sheet wherein the family news was conveyed, or the experiences, opinions, and feelings of individuals were made known.

All this is now a thing of the past. To-day the letter is forestalled in its chief news by the newspaper. The increased facility of communication has encouraged brevity and haste. We dash off a dozen letters in an hour or two, instead of devoting half a day to the production of one; and social history is chronicled in notes, or even notelets, instead of being detailed in elaborate epistles. The best letters to-day are brief, terse, epigrammatic; everything — news, counsel, and sentiment — squeezed into a few hasty sentences. They are like Liebig’s “extract of beef,” or condensed milk; like potted game, or the essence of a

thousand roses in a few drops of perfume. Almost everybody seems consciously or unconsciously to act on the maxim of Sam Weller in "Pickwick." "Rayther short, is n't it?" suggests his father, when the son has concluded his epistle to Mary, with whom he is in love. "Always leave off so she'll vish there vas more," is the shrewd reply, — an aphorism that condenses the epistolary wisdom of the age.

Although the letters of "ye olden time" were generally long, studied, and formal, it must not be supposed that our great-grandfathers and grandmothers could not be curt, and even pithy and pointed, when occasion demanded. On the contrary, their more painstaking and careful practice in epistolary composition, in which they sought for the choicest expression of their ideas, qualified them to say the most telling things, when they wished, in the tersest way. Some examples of this will perhaps interest the reader. The first is the reply of the Duke of Dorset to Lord Berkeley, who wrote : —

DEAR DORSET, — I have just been married, and am the happiest dog alive.

BERKELEY.

DEAR BERKELEY, — Every dog has his day.

DORSET.

Lord Eldon, long-winded as were many of his legal judgments, could be brief enough in his epistles, as witness his note to his friend, Dr. Fisher, of the Charterhouse : —

DEAR FISHER, — I cannot, to-day, give you the preferment for which you ask.

Your sincere friend,

ELDON.

[*Turn over.*]

I gave it you yesterday.

The well-known letter of Dr. Franklin to his old friend Strahan, of London, a member of the British Parliament, is as pithy as it is pungent: —

You have begun to burn our towns, and murder our people. Look upon your hands! They are stained with the blood of your relations! You and I were long friends; you are now my enemy, and I am

Yours,

B. FRANKLIN.

What could be more curt than the correspondence between Dr. Nathaniel Emmons, pastor for fifty-four years at Franklin, Mass., and Dr. Griffin, of Andover, in the same State, two celebrated divines of the last century? The former published a sermon on a cardinal doctrine in theology, which provoked the following letter from his Andover brother: —

DEAR SIR, — I have read your sermon on the Atonement, and wept over it.

Truly yours,

E. D. GRIFFIN.

Dr. Emmons promptly replied: —

DEAR SIR, — I have received your letter relative to my sermon, and have laughed over it.

Yours truly,

NATH'L EMMONS.

A neat correspondence was that between an Archbishop of York and a Bishop of Cork: —

DEAR CORK, — Please ordain Stanhope.

YORK.

DEAR YORK, — Stanhope is ordained.

CORK.

Men with grievances generally air their vocabularies freely in their correspondence; but the writer of the following was an economist of words: —

SIR, — I was a lieutenant with General Stanhope when he took Minorca in 1708, for which he was made a lord. I was a lieutenant with General Blakeney when he lost Minorca in 1756, for which he was made a lord. I am a lieutenant still!

It has been said that proverbs should be sold in pairs, since nearly every "old saw" is contradicted by some other one, so that they are really *see-saws*, that cut both ways. Some sixty years ago a New England mother wrote to her restless, roving son, then in New Orleans:

DEAR SON, — Come home. A rolling stone gathers no moss.

To which the young man replied: —

DEAR MOTHER, — I can't come. A setting hen never grows fat.

Two unsurpassed specimens of Yankee brevity were the order sent by a Colonel Boyd to a commissariat officer named Brown, and the reply, neither of which could have been condensed into fewer words. The order was: "Brown — beef — Boyd;" the reply, sent with the supplies, was: "Boyd — beef — Brown." Lord Beaconsfield, in one of his letters, tells of an amusing "tit for tat." Lord Brougham asked Daniel Webster verbally to dine with him, and next day sent him a card headed, "To remind." Webster immediately replied by another card headed, "To acknowledge."

During the administration of President Jackson, Amos Kendall, United States Postmaster-General, wishing to know the source of a southern river, wrote to a village postmaster, —

SIR, — This department desires to know how far the Tombigbee runs up.

Respectfully yours, etc.

By return mail came : —

SIR, — The Tombigbee does not run *up* at all. It runs *down*.  
Very respectfully yours, etc.

A New York editor, who wrote to a brother journalist in Connecticut for information concerning an inundation in his locality, “Send full particulars of the flood,” received the reply: “You will find them in Genesis.” Many years ago a New England trader wrote this note to a dilatory debtor : —

To avoid all proceedings unpleasant,  
I beg you will pay what is due;  
If you do, you ’ll oblige *me* at present, —  
If you don’t, then I ’ll oblige *you*.

Gibbon, in his “Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire,” recalls what he calls “an epistle of tremendous brevity,” sent by the Arabian Caliph, Harun-al-Rashid, to the Byzantine Emperor, Nicephorus. When the latter came to the throne, he resolved no longer to pay tribute to the caliph, and wrote a letter to him ending with these words: “Restore the fruits of your injustice, or abide the determination of the sword.” At these words, the emperor’s ambassadors cast a bundle of swords before the foot of the throne. Smiling at the menace, the caliph drew his scimitar, and cut asunder the feeble arms of the Greeks, without turning the edge of the blade. He then dictated this reply: “In the name of the most merciful God, Harun-al-Rashid to Nicephorus, the Roman dog: I have read thy letter, O thou son of an unbelieving mother! Thou shalt not hear, thou shalt behold my reply,” — a reply which was written in characters of blood and fire on the plains of Phrygia.



One of the greatest masters of terse epistolary writing was the cynical and witty Talleyrand, whose single words did sometimes the work of a sentence. When a lady friend informed him, in a pathetic letter, that she had become a widow, he replied in a note of two words, "Hélas ! Madame." To a letter supplicating not long afterward his influence on behalf of an officer whom she was about to marry, he simply replied, "Ho ! ho ! Madame." The letter of a celebrated Frenchwoman to her husband was a model of conciseness : "I begin, because I have nothing to do ; I end, because I have nothing to say." Napier, the hero of Scinde, is said to have announced his conquest of that country in a letter of one Latin word, *Peccavi*. The tersest and most terrible letter ever written by a king was probably that indited by Frederick the Great to the Jew banker, who, dreading subsidies and loans, prayed his Majesty to allow him to travel for the benefit of his health : "Dear Ephraim, nothing but death shall part us." That was a pithy yet comprehensive letter which Politian once wrote to a friend : "I was very sorry, and am very glad, because thou wast sick, and that thou art whole." When Samuel Rogers wrote to Lady Dufferin, "Will you dine with me on Wednesday?" she replied, "Won't I?"

It would be hard to surpass in force and brevity this letter sent by Ann, Countess of Dorset, to Sir Joseph Williamson, Secretary of State under Charles II., who wanted her to appoint a courtier as a member of Parliament from Appleby.

SIR, — I have been bullied by a usurper, I have been ill-treated by a court ; but I won't be dictated to by a subject. Your man shall not stand.

ANN DORSET, PEMBROKE and MONTGOMERY.

**Sentimentalists.** SINCE the days of Sterne, the word “sentimentalism” has had an odious sense; but it is doubtful whether the thing which it describes is not still held in high repute. It is a poor way, however, to judge of a man’s benevolence by what he *says* about his pity for the poor and unfortunate, and what glorious things he would do for them, *if* he was a little richer, or *if* things were so and so. Don’t conclude that such a person is all heart and soul because he talks so beautifully; nor set down another as devoid of feeling because he says nothing about his “acute sensibilities,” or how his heart bleeds “for his poor, suffering fellow-creatures.” Gruff, blunt old Dr. Johnson seemed at times utterly lacking in sensibility, yet under his rough exterior there was a fount of deep feeling; and though his wife was old, ugly, and fretful, he passed the anniversary of her death with a darkened house, and with prayers, fasting, and tears ever afterwards. On the other hand, many a man gets the credit of exquisite sensibilities because he has the art of feigning emotions that he does not feel, — a knack of speaking tremulously, and lachrymal glands which are easily excited. Such men appear to feel deeply, but never feel — in their pockets.

Rousseau prided himself on his sensibility, and thousands have wept over the touching descriptions of his sorrows in his “Confessions.” But it vexed and humiliated him to think that he was a cobbler’s son; and when his honest parent waited at the door of the theatre to embrace his son on the success of his first piece, the inhuman poet repulsed his venerable father with insult and contempt. No author ever reddened the eyes of his readers more frequently than Sterne; yet Horace Walpole tells us that his

mother, who was a school-mistress, having got in debt through a daughter's extravagance, would have rotted in jail but for the help she received from the parents of her scholars. Her son, who could draw floods of tears by his pictures of distress and misery, had too much sentiment to have any feeling; he cared more for a dead ass than for a living mother.

Never were tenderness of sentiment and atrocity of conduct more intimately combined than in Robespierre and the other cut-throats of the French Revolution. The favorite amusement of the deadliest of his fellow-murderers was the *rearing of doves*. He said that the contemplation of their innocence made the charm of his existence in consoling him for the wickedness of men. Couthon, at the commencement of the Revolution, was looked upon as the mildest creature to be found out of a pastoral. He had a *figure d'ange*, heavenly with compassionate tenderness. Even when he had attained to the height of his homicidal celebrity, he was carried to the National Assembly or the Jacobite Club (though young, he had lost the use of his limbs) fondling little lapdogs, which he nestled in his bosom. An anecdote is told of one of his *confrères*, who was as fatal to men and as loving to dogs as himself, that when a distracted wife, who had pleaded to him in vain for her husband's life, in retiring from his presence chanced to tread on his favorite spaniel's tail, he exclaimed, "Good heavens, Madame! have you then no humanity?"

**"Defend Me from My Friends!"** WHEN Marshal Villars was taking leave of Louis XIV. for a campaign in Germany, he said "Defend me from my friends: I can defend myself from my enemies." Since then, as well as

before, how many public men have had occasion to utter the same paradox! Who brought Charles I. to the block, and who dethroned James II.? It was not Pym and Hampden who were chiefly instrumental in the execution of the former; but Laud and Strafford, his adviser and minister. It was not James's enemies, the Whigs, but his professed friends, the bigots, who preached passive obedience, and deceived him by their misrepresentations of public sentiment, that drove him to abdicate the sceptre. So with Louis XVI.; he was dethroned and destroyed not by mad republicans, but by rabid ultra-monarchists, who clung to the exploded ideas of a bygone age, and plotted for his restoration to a power which, since the revolution in public sentiment, he could no longer exercise.

Many of the noblest enterprises of modern times have been similarly ruined, not by the open attacks of their opposers, however numerous or powerful, but by the rash deeds or utterances of hot-headed and conceited zealots, who have loved the schemes not wisely but too well, and regarded every concession, however slight or reasonable, as a dereliction of principle. The same thing is true of great philosophies like the Aristotelian, and of scientific systems like that of Linnæus, the Swedish naturalist. They have fallen into disrepute, not so much on account of their acknowledged defects as through the extravagant claims made for them by their friends after they have had their day, and the march of science has left them in the background.

Who has forgotten the extravagant hero-worship of which Bishop Brooks — to whom nothing could have been more revolting in his lifetime — was made the victim by some religious journals just after his death? Many a



popular clergyman has occasion again and again to deprecate the fulsome and nauseous praise of which he is made the victim by indiscreet friends, — praise which is sure to provoke in many minds the very opposite impression to that which is intended. Who, again, has forgotten the unfortunate phrase of one of James G. Blaine’s political friends, the “Rum, Romanism, and Rebellion,” which in all probability cheated that statesman out of the Presidency of the United States when it was apparently almost within his grasp? How many authors, who think no more highly of themselves than they ought to think, or perhaps even underrate their own abilities and achievements, are supposed to be full of self-conceit, and consequently are ridiculed or scoffed at by the small critics of the day, because their publishers have blazoned to the world, in advertisements and circulars, all the over-laudatory newspaper notices of their books, — notices which are more offensive to such authors than the most savage criticism! How much has the cause of temperance been damaged by intemperate advocacy! Finally, and worst of all, how much have the Bible and Christianity suffered from hasty and ill-considered “apologies” by their friends! The damage which all the open attack of the Tolands, Bolingbrokes, and Paines, as well as the covert innuendoes and sneers of the Voltaires and Gibbons, failed to inflict, has been done in no small degree by the arguments of weak and ill-equipped champions of the truth. Let all such zealots ponder the words of Sir Thomas Browne: “Every man is not a proper champion of truth, nor fit to take up the gauntlet in the cause of verity; many, from the ignorance of those maxims and an inconsiderate zeal unto truth, have too rashly charged the troops of error, and remain as trophies unto



the enemies of truth. A man may be in as just possession of truth as of a city, and yet be forced to surrender; 't is far better, therefore, to enjoy her with peace than to hazard her on a battle."

**Classic Wit.** Few persons are aware that the man who thundered against Verres in the Roman Senate, and blasted Catiline with his lightnings, was a wit as well as an orator, and even deigned to pun when he could make a hard hit by doing so. Though but few of his jests are preserved, they are of such a quality as to show that he had a keen, razor-like wit that could draw blood when he chose. A Roman lady having told Cicero on a certain occasion that she was but thirty years old, "It must be true," replied Tully, "for I have heard her say so these twenty years." When Pompey, who had married Cæsar's daughter, asked Cicero — referring to Dolabella, who had joined Cæsar's party — "where is your son-in-law?" Cicero retorted, "with your father-in-law." Denouncing Verres, he declares that he was indeed *Verres*, for he *swept* the province; and again punning on the name, others, he says, may be partial to the *jus verrinum*, — which might mean "Verrine law," or "boar-sauce," — but not he. When Cicero saw his diminutive son-in-law, Dolabella, girt with a gigantic weapon, he asked, "Who has tied Dolabella to that sword?" "Rem acu tetigisti" ("You have pricked the thing with a *needle*," — that is, you have handled the subject acutely) was the orator's ironical compliment to a senator who had formerly been a tailor.

Quintilian celebrates Cicero's *urbanitas*, the word by which the ancients expressed that peculiar elegance of humor which smacks of the cultivation of a capital; but

the great orator sometimes stooped to coarse facetiousness, — as when, in allusion to the Oriental custom of boring the ears of slaves, he replied to a man of Eastern and servile descent, who complained that he could not hear him, “ Yet you have holes in your ears ! ” Of the same character, though perhaps more excusable, is the following retort, mentioned by Mr. Forsyth in his late life of Cicero : “ It is never right, nor in good taste, to make a jest on a personal infirmity ; but Plutarch mentions a sarcasm that almost justified an exception to the rule. To understand the point, we must remember that a short, thick neck, like that of a bull, was thought by Romans the sign of an impudent, unscrupulous character. Vatinius, a rude and insolent man, whose neck was swollen with tumors, came before him, when sitting as prætor, with some petition or request, which Cicero said he would take time to consider. Vatinius replied that if *he* were prætor, he would make no question about it. Upon which Cicero retorted, ‘ Yes ; but you see I have not got so much neck [we should say *cheek*] as you have.’ ”

A recent English writer, speaking of what he calls the “ quips ” of Cicero, says that “ they are among the most trying witticisms extant.” Far different was the opinion of the great German scholar and historian, Niebuhr. “ The predominant and most brilliant faculty of Cicero’s mind,” he says, “ was his wit. In what the French call *esprit*, — light, unexpected, and inexhaustible wit, — he is not excelled by any among the ancients.” No doubt there was a flavor of bitterness at times in his jests, and they left a sting behind which was neither forgiven nor forgotten. “ He would have been a match for Talleyrand,” says his able biographer, William Forsyth, “ at a repartee.”

**A Safe Preacher.** THERE are some persons who regard it as the highest encomium on a clergyman to say that he is "a safe preacher." By "a safe preacher" is meant one who travels by easy stages on the old, orthodox roads; who never bothers his brains with queries about new or improved ones, but jogs on at a comfortable pace, — now and then looking out of the coach window to see that all is right, and then dropping to sleep again.

To Christians who love to be "at ease in Zion," such preachers are very acceptable. They never startle the ears of the hearer by original thoughts or novel interpretations of Scripture; and, after listening to them once, he feels that he can doze in his pew without danger. Such preaching promotes Church unity: the hearers are never at loggerheads about the soundness of the doctrine. They had such a preacher once at Rouen, in France. A French priest, speaking of the excitement produced there by Bourdaloue's preaching, when the merchants and mechanics, lawyers and physicians, left their occupations and thronged the church, added: "*But when I went there to preach, I put all things right again. Not a man of them left his business.*"

**Little Sins.** It is said that in some harbors the timbers of a ship are bored by a little insect, which pierces the stout oak as by a thread of fire, so that it snaps under its own weight, and crumbles into dust. How many men fall to pieces in just the same way! Though made apparently of the sternest stuff, — of the very heart of oak, — and proof against the severest strain, they startle us by collapsing in a single day. The truth is, the "Pontic pine" of their minds and hearts was eaten

into by a swarm of little sins, — petty microscopic vices, — till, before they were aware, it was riddled through and through, honey-combed, so as to break at the smallest pressure. Take care of the pence, and the pounds will take care of themselves; be conscientious about little sins, and you need not trouble yourself to avoid great ones.

**The Artificial-  
ity of Modern  
Society.**

IN looking over a file of old papers, we were much amused by an account of an accident which befell a Southern “carpet-bagger.” The man, who seems to have been of the composite order of architecture, abused an “honorable gentleman,” a fellow-member of a Southern Legislature, whereupon the “honorable gentleman” knocked him down. The wig flew from the carpet-bagger’s head, his glass eye was smashed, and his ears dropped under his coat-collar.

Considering the extent to which human limbs and organs are now manufactured, — that men wear not only false hair, but wooden legs, glass eyes, mineral teeth, gutta-percha noses and palates, silver arteries, and ivory-pegged bones, — it is not strange that political economists and moralists talk so much about “the artificial construction of modern society.” Who can be sure that any person he talks, trades, or travels with, or even makes love to, is entirely human? As one goes about to-day among his neighbors, he is often tempted to question whether they are entirely human. The whole population seems like the enchanted prince in the Arabian Nights, — upwards flesh, and downwards marble, or like Milton’s lion, whose fore-parts were live and rampant, while the hinder-parts were “of the earth, earthy,” to which they clung. When a policeman picks up a gentleman or lady knocked down by a Jehu-

like driver, he must often be sorely puzzled to decide whither the body should be sent for "repairs," — whether to the surgeon, the machinist, or the carpenter. "Some of us," as the Yankee said when he saw a baboon's skeleton, "are fearfully and wonderfully made!"

**Criticism of  
"the Hub"  
Fathers.**

SOME of the newspapers in the envious little cities of New York, Chicago, etc., recently tried to poke fun at "the Hub" because its rulers have mistaken George Washington for Sam Adams. It seems that a bust which had been exhibited for many years in Doric Hall, in the State House, as that of Adams, was subsequently discovered to be that of the "Pater Patriæ."

Well, "vot of it?" as Samuel Weller would say. In the Vatican at Rome there is a full length statue, in the features of which men saw for ages vividly exhibited the man whom the Athenians ostracized because they were tired of hearing him called "The Just." Now it is labelled Æschines instead of Aristides, and artists and scholars are struck with the truthfulness of the portraiture, and note in every facial expression the *vis vivida* of the orator who dared, in a contest of eloquence, to compete with that "monster" Demosthenes, as Æschines called him, when addressing the Rhodians after his banishment. The truth is, if we may judge of the "Father of his Country" by the many differing "counterfeit presentments" of him, there were twenty different Washingtons; and that one of them should be confounded with the Calvinist-Republican patriot, Samuel Adams, is not a whit surprising. Go look at the fine bust of Washington in the Athenæum, by Houdin, which so humanizes him as no



other perhaps does, and say whether the stiff, cold, austere, statuesque Washington of Stuart is not as unlike to it as "I to Hercules!"

**Slips of the Tongue and Pen.** THE fact that this is a fast age, an age of steam and electricity, is illustrated by nothing more strikingly than by the haste with which men write and talk, and the consequent contradictions, solecisms, and incongruities which their language exhibits. A volume might easily be filled with examples of such slipshod English, which would be at once amusing and instructive.

One of the prolific writers of to-day is Dr. A. K. H. Boyd, whose last work, "Twenty-five Years of St. Andrews," is disfigured by not a little careless, not to say slovenly, writing. A pet word of his is "outstanding," which is repeated to weariness. Two volumes of essays by John Skelton are pronounced "very outstanding." Rev. Dr. Caird is "our most outstanding preacher," etc. Here is an independent sentence: "Which thing he could not have liked." As a rule, "The Country Parson" does not write obscurely, but there is an ambiguity in the following passage: "I never could get Tulloch to admire Caird. Shairp downright disliked Caird's preaching. It seemed to me unintelligible." *What* seemed unintelligible? Caird's preaching? Yes, according to the grammatical construction of the passage; but the writer probably means that he cannot understand why Tulloch and Shairp did not like Caird's preaching.

A writer in "Blackwood" asserts that "some authors allow it to transpire that they keep a note-book, in which they enter every happy thought or pretty simile that occurs

to their leisure, to be incorporated subsequently into some larger work. The prepared similes are very certain to do *him* no credit," etc. To whom does *him* refer? The sentiment of the passage is as questionable as the grammatical construction.

A writer in the "Westminster Review" says of Dr. Johnson: "*Invariably* late down for breakfast, he did once happen to be so soon as to have to wait for others." This rivals George Saintsbury's "constantly right in general," and surpasses, if possible, the characterization of Bradford by an English M. P., as "rather radical in the extreme," and also the remark of an English political writer, that in France "the *decline* of the material comforts of the working classes . . . had now reached an alarming *height*."

A writer in the London "Contemporary Review," a nobleman eminent as a scholar, makes the following strange remark: "We hardly think the established usage *deserves* quite the *condign* censure which he bestows upon it." What is condign censure but *that which is deserved*? and if this definition is correct, how can there be any degrees of such censure?

John Morley is usually a correct writer; but in his book on Rousseau (Vol. II., pp. 35-36), we find this: "Julia is *devoured* by a source of secret chagrin."

A physician once boasted to Sir Henry Halford, "I was the first to discover the Asiatic cholera, and to communicate it to the public." This *lapsus linguæ*, ludicrous as it is, was surpassed by a remark made by the King of Portugal on being introduced to Sir Edwin Landseer. He meant, no doubt, to be complimentary when he said that he was delighted to make the painter's acquaintance, as he (the

king) "was always fond of beasts." With this unfortunate slip, we may couple one by a writer in the "Cornhill Magazine," who warned his readers that the buyer of a horse might "find himself *saddled* with a worthless animal."

An Irish soldier, who had captured three prisoners in a battle, explained his *modus operandi* to his wondering captain by saying: "Sure, your honor, I *surrounded* them!" Rip Van Winkle must have a multiplicity similar to Pat's, for Washington Irving says "that Rip was generally seen *trooping* at his mother's heels." This feat of Rip's recalls an account by the "Pall Mall Gazette," one day, of a political demonstration in the county of Mayo, Ireland, when "one thousand men entered Castlebar, *each* supplied with a shillelah, and *headed by a band*."

The people of this happy country must have been doubly pleased when President Zachary Taylor announced in a message to Congress that the United States were "at peace with all the world," and, in addition, continued "to cherish relations of amity *with the rest of mankind*." This stroke of rhetoric was almost surpassed by General Cass, in a speech at the Congressional banquet to Kossuth in 1851: "Shall we sit here *blindfolded*, and see tyranny prevailing in every region of the world?"

Henry A. Wise once said to the House of Burgesses, of Virginia: "Virginia has *an iron chain* of mountains running through her centre, which God has placed there to *milk* the clouds, and to be the source of her *silver rivers*." This delicious confusion of metaphors recalls to our recollection a passage in an oration on Spain by a college junior, which it was once our task to read and correct. In describing the mineral resources of that country, he burst forth in the following strain: "Her mountain chains,

pregnant with inexhaustible ore, lift their hands to Heaven imploring to be delivered ! ”

Colman, the dramatist who wrote chiefly at night, makes this paradoxical statement : “ When I have grown *heated* with my subject, it has so *chilled my limbs* that I have gone to bed as cold as if I had been sitting up to my knees in ice.”

“ Sir, *she* was *man* enough to resist Russia,” said an English politician regarding Bulgaria, some years ago, — a metaphor which recalls a passage in a work by a popular writer, who says of a clergyman “ that the Pope is to him a ravenous old *woman*, as to whom he cannot say whether *he* is *most* ravenous, or *most* old-womanish.”

An editorial article in the Boston “ Daily Herald ” informed the readers of that paper one day that “ Sir Charles Dilke does not think that a war between France or Germany to-day would bring on a conflict in which the different European powers would be engaged.”

A Boston correspondent of the Chicago “ Standard ” says that whatever President Andrews, of Brown University, writes, “ compels reading by its *excessive* vigor.” It was an English, not an Irish, undertaker who wrote to the corporation of London : “ I am desired to inform the Court of Aldermen that Mr. Alderman Gill died last night, by order of Mrs. Gill ; ” and it was a New England, not a Western, newspaper which startled its readers one day with this intelligence : “ Another man has been killed by a railroad car which was running into Boston, *supposed to be deaf*. He hastened home [*quære*, after he had been killed ? ], when every means for his recovery was resorted to by his doating family ; but, in spite of all their efforts, *he died in the triumph of the Christian religion.* ”

In the London "Times" six columns were filled with Lord Dufferin's address at his installation as rector of the University of Aberdeen. The speech was eminently thoughtful, scholarly, and practical; and though it was printed in solid, eye-killing type, we read it with the keenest interest. After this acknowledgment we may be allowed, without being considered a "word-catcher that lives on syllables," to express our surprise at the misuse of the last word in the following passage: "Apart from, and in addition to, whatever may be the professional and obligatory occupations of your lives, you should invent for yourselves an interest or employment as distinct as possible from your usual *avocations*." What are a man's "avocations?" Are they not, as the etymology of the word shows (*a vocatio*), the pursuits or amusements which engage his attention when he is "called away from" his regular business or ordinary calling?

In the thirteenth volume of the English Dictionary of National Biography, the writer of George Eliot's Life says of her novel, "Romola," that "no one can deny the intellectual powers displayed; but the personages are scarcely alive, except Tito Melema, who is one of her finest *feminine* characters!"

In a New York newspaper it was announced one Saturday that on the next day a certain pastor would "*supersede* the preaching of Christ in the — Baptist Church with a talk about 'The Ideal Wife.'"

Some years ago, one Dr. Hunter, an Englishman, published a book of travels, in which he stated that in the island of Malta "the *ridges* of the houses were *flat*," and said that "the Orientals never take a *walk* but *on horseback*."



An English journal recently stated that “a new *feature* in the social arrangements of the Central Radical Club *took place* the other evening.”

When captain Cook's death was announced in England, in 1779, many poetasters wrote elegies on the great navigator, one of which began, —

“Minerva in heaven disconsolate mourned  
The loss of her Cook,” etc.

Some years ago, Dr. Lucius E. Smith, the acute literary critic of the Boston “Watchman,” in a notice of Professor Richardson's recent work on American Literature, pointed out a singular *lapsus pennæ*: “Not many bards could so confidently say (if I may reverently use the quotation), ‘What I have written I have written.’” The words so “reverently” quoted are those of Pontius Pilate.

In Campbell's “Pleasures of Hope,” and in his “Gertrude of Wyoming,” the tiger is represented as stealing along the banks of Lake Erie, and the panther as domiciled in the woods of Ohio; while the flamingo disports itself in Pennsylvania waters, and the tropical aloe and palm flourish in the same northern latitudes.

It is sometimes a faint or shadowy line which separates such *lapsus linguæ et pennæ* as the foregoing from those daring and designed paradoxes of expression which we find in all great writers, prose or poetical; yet the hearer's or reader's instinct in most cases easily distinguishes between the two classes of expression. Some of the finest lines in poetry owe their charm to these intentional self-contradictions, — as, Milton's “dark with excessive bright,” “not light, but darkness visible,” and W. W. Story's couplet, —

"Of every noble work the silent part is best, —  
Of all expression, that which cannot be expressed."

Milton's prose, as well as his poetry, abounds in these paradoxes, for which he has the precedent of the best Greek and Roman writers, — as when he speaks of certain preachers who "*wade out to their auditors, up to their eyebrows in deep shallows that wet not the instep.*" Keats, in his poem of "*The Pot of Basil,*" thus anticipates the victim's death: —

"So the two brothers and *their murdered man*  
Rode toward fair Florence."

Regarded literally, this is a gross blunder; but it is a blunder only to a prosaic, matter-of-fact mind. The imaginative reader sees in the lines only "the activity of the imagination darting forward to the murder, 'a ghastly foregone conclusion,'" as Leigh Hunt has well called it. Similar to these lines of Keats is the language of Sir Thomas Browne: "In a word, conceive *light as invisible*, and that is a spirit;" and Job's "a land . . . without any day, and where *the light is as darkness.*"

Who does not admire Lord Coke's fine paradox, *Apices juris non sunt jura*, — "the highest peaks of the law are not law;" and the still more daring injunction of Scripture, which is only the more impressive by being illogical, "Leave off strife before it be meddled with;" and again, the Psalmist's declaration, "If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem *before my chief joy*"? How forcible are the verbal contradictions of the Apostle Paul in 2 Corinthians vi. 9, 10, and xii. 10; and how pregnant with meaning is his paradoxical exhortation in Philippians ii. 12, 13:

“ Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure ” ! How expressive are the *insaniens sapientia, strenua inertia, concordia discors rerum, lene tormentum* and *dulce periculum* of Horace ! Of how much of his charm would that fine old fantast Sir Thomas Browne be robbed, were we to expunge from the “ Religio Medici ” such bold felicities of expression as these : “ I fear God, yet am not afraid of him ; ” “ The way to be immortal is to die daily ; ” “ Sleep is a death whereby we live ; ” “ There is no such injury as revenge, and no such revenge as contempt of an injury ” ! How happily does Molière, in “ Les Femmes Savantes,” make Chrysale complain, —

“ Raisonner est l’emploi de toute ma maison,  
Et le raisonnement en bannit la raison ” !

**Hisses Silenced.** MOLIÈRE observes that “ the impromptu reply is precisely the touchstone of wit.” It is when such a reply follows an attack, especially a sudden and unexpected attack, that it provokes the highest praise. Nothing is more admirable, nothing more quickly wins our sympathy, than this perfect command and instant concentration of all the faculties when a man is taken at a disadvantage, and has to repel an insinuation or an insult without a moment’s warning.

Theodore Parker, when interrupted in a platform speech by an insulting query, exclamation, or hiss, was sometimes eminently felicitous in his retort. About forty years ago we heard him make his first anti-slavery speech, at a Garrisonian anti-slavery convention in Faneuil Hall. Having recited, in the course of his speech, which was full of

stinging sarcasms, the three items of the creed of Massachusetts regarding the Trinity, he added: "Now, the *practical* creed is, 'I believe in the gold eagle almighty; I believe in the silver dollar; I believe in the copper cent, — and these three make one money.'" A loud hiss from the gallery followed this sarcasm, whereupon, turning to face the hisser, the speaker said: "I have given you your belief in *my own* language, and you have responded 'Amen' in *yours*."

Not less felicitous was a characteristic *mot* of that sturdy Baptist preacher Dr. Nathaniel Colver, when officiating as chairman at an anti-slavery meeting one evening in Tremont Temple. One of the speakers having stirred up a tempest of excitement and noise in which hisses were followed by stamps of applause, the doctor stepped forward on the platform and begged his anti-slavery friends to be silent. "Don't you know," said he, "that you might as well try to get the ding out of a shovel by kicking at it, as to try to stamp the hiss out of a goose?"

**Reasons for Marrying.** OF the reasons given for and against marriage, it is difficult to say which are the most whimsical. Lord Bacon says that the most ordinary cause of a single life is liberty, especially in "certain self-pleasing and humorous minds," which are "so sensible of every restraint as almost to think their very garters to be shackles." On the other hand, some men marry because it is the fashion; others, because they don't know what else to do with themselves; others, because they have n't the wit to get a living single; others, because they have "an insane desire to pay some young lady's board." Goethe, the "many-sided," said he married to obtain respectability; Wycherly, in his old age, took his servant

girl for his wife to spite his relations. John Wilkes, the notorious demagogue, declared he married solely to please his friends. A young and "fast" gentleman of our acquaintance married a lady nearly old enough to be his grandmother, because he owed her a debt of fifty dollars for board; the bargain, he afterwards feelingly declared, was a hard one, — protesting with tears in his eyes, that, notwithstanding the tightness of the times, he "went off cheap, dirt cheap."

Next to love, money is one of the most powerful persuasives to matrimony, which in this case is literally a *matter of money*. The man who marries from this motive has, as the author of "Philip Van Artevelde" remarks, one advantage over those who marry for other considerations, — he can know what he gets. If he can feed upon husks and draff, it is competent to him to see that his trough is filled. Personal beauty is, with the million, a more frequent inducement to double blessedness; and certainly, if a man is ever excusable for blindly following his impulses and shutting his ears to the cold dictates of reason, it is when he thinks of a fair hand pouring out for him his tea, and of sipping his coffee under the influence of an incarnation of that divine beauty which has been the living music of the world since the time of Adam. But the worshipper of beauty has, like everybody else, alas! his disappointments. Oftentimes "he thinks he has hung a trinket about his neck, and, behold! it is a millstone." He thinks he has married a woman only, but he has wedded himself also to a mass of chalk, paint, and crinoline, a basket of novels, a poodle-dog, and a system of weak nerves that will keep two or three servants and as many doctors round his house all his lifetime.



When an old bachelor marries, it is commonly because he is tired of cold dinners, hot bricks at night, and defalcations in his shirt-buttons. This is not the highest of motives, but it is a shade more exalted than that urged by a bibulous old gentleman in counselling a young man to get a wife: "Because then, my boy, you'll have somebody to pull off your boots when you come home drunk." In Williams's "Fejee Islands" we have the following unique proposal of marriage, made by one Simioni Wangkavou, a native, to a lady of that ilk: "I do not wish to marry you because you are a good-looking woman; that you are not. But a woman is like a necklace of flowers, pleasant to the eye and grateful to the smell; but such a necklace does not long continue attractive, — beautiful as it is one day, the next it fades and loses its scent. Yet a pretty necklace tempts one to ask for it, but, if refused, no one will often repeat his request. If you love me, I love you; but if not, neither do I love you; only let it be a settled thing." One of the strangest motives for marriage is that which is sometimes assigned by a lady for marrying a disagreeable lover endowed with the will of a Cæsar and the "final perseverance of the saints," who persecutes her with ceaseless attentions, — namely, that she marries him "to get rid of him." The most unique motive to matrimony we have ever heard of was that suggested in the advice of an old sportsman in one of the border counties of Scotland. His niece was the heiress of broad lands which adjoined an estate belonging to a younger brother of the turf, and the senior gentleman, when dilating to her on the exploits they had performed together by wood and wold, was wont to wind up thus: "Maria, take my advice, and marry young Fleetwood, and you'll see this county hunted in style."

It is a curious fact, that almost every person who commits matrimony seems to think some apology necessary. The number of those who marry "to benefit society," because "otherwise the world would be depopulated," is legion. But none of the reasons given by bachelors and maidens for first entering the holy state can match those sometimes assigned by widowers and widows for the second experiment. The Russians tell a story of a widow who took a second husband to prevent herself from weeping to death over the loss of her "dear departed" first. A better anecdote is that told of a beautiful young American widow who married a rich old widower. Being asked why she took up with such an old stick, she replied: "From pure love; I love the ground [meaning his estate] on which he walks, and the very house he lives in." Charming ingenuousness, and as rare as it is charming! Surpassing this in disinterestedness, if not in purity of motive, was the reason given by an Irishman for his second wedding. The bride was a heretical Protestant, and Pat averred that he "niver would hive put a ring on a woman's finger afther his darlint Rose, if it had n't been to save the sowl of that poor crayther." A crushing refutation, this incident, of the theory of the "selfish school" of philosophers! Perhaps the best story of second marriage is one told by the Orientals, with which we conclude. A young and lovely woman, being reft of her lord by death, was plunged into the deepest and most heart-rending grief. She made the heavens vocal with her plaints; declared herself the most wretched of women; and calling upon every feeling heart to listen to her "billyow ecstasy of woe," vowed in the intensity of her grief that she would wed no new lord till the stream which ran by her bower should reverse

its course. A few weeks after she was observed busily engaged in damming up the stream!

**“Revivals of Religion.”** WHY is it that some good men are opposed to what are called “revivals of religion”? Is it because of the “undue excitement,” as it is termed, which attends them? But if religion is man’s most important concern, why should he be intensely excited about everything else but that? Why, again, if men become suddenly and startlingly conscious, for the first time, of the extreme lowness of their aims; of their selfishness; of the large mixture of evil in all their motives, desires, and purposes; of their utter ingratitude to their Creator, Preserver, and Benefactor, — why should they *not* be excited; and if they *are* excited, why shall we not rejoice if the feeling is deep enough to bear them over the first difficult transition to a higher type of life? Intense religious feeling is not *per se* a good thing, but it may be exceedingly desirable on account of the higher level of action to which it may lift men up. Men are such slaves of habit, so undecided, so much “of the earth, earthy,” that without some initial impulse to start them, some new motive-power just to help them take the first step, the change from the old to the new life is difficult in the extreme. Calmness, steadfastness, and “patient continuance in well-doing” are, no doubt, the truest characteristics of the inner life; but, on the other hand, passionate feeling may be of incalculable value, if, like a great tidal wave, it takes men who are stranded on the sands of selfishness, apathy, or indecision over the bar which separates the lower from the higher level of spiritual conduct.

Archbishop Whately was not a religious enthusiast. So

devoid are his religious writings of all heat or passion, and so replete with appeals to the logical faculty of his readers, that to a fervid Christian he seems like a clerical icicle. Yet, in speaking of the outcry against religious excitement, he says: "It seems to be taken for granted that when the feelings are strongly excited they are necessarily over-excited. Stimulants are not to be condemned as necessarily bringing the body into an unnatural state, because they raise the circulation: in fever this would be hurtful; but there may be a torpid, lethargic disease in which an excitement of the circulation is precisely what is wanted to bring it into a healthy condition."

In these days of mammon-worship, materialistic science, and spiritual apathy, it seems incredible that any body of Christians should deprecate religious excitement. "I should have thought," said the eloquent Dr. Maclaren of Manchester, England, on a recent occasion, "that the last piece of furniture which any church in the nineteenth century needed was a refrigerator. A poker and a pair of bellows would be much more needful for them."

**"I Hae a  
Coo Noo."** THE most effectual way of converting a fiery radical into a cool conservative is to make him an owner of property. Lend him a pair of gold spectacles, and he will see at once the other side of the moon, which was invisible before. Many years ago Davy Armstrong, a determined radical in Scotland, left his native village for another town, where a long while afterward he was met by an old fellow-grumbler, who began the old song about the oppressions of the government. To the astonishment of his friend, Davy shook his head and soon showed that he was a rank tory. Wondering at the change, his



friend begged to know the reason. "I hae a coo noo," ("I have a cow now") was the significant reply.

In Louis XVIII.'s narrative of his escape from Paris he notices with approbation the remark of his English servant, that there were neither democrats nor aristocrats in France; for every man who had but sixpence considered one who had a shilling an aristocrat. "This," says the thoughtful, epigrammatic author of "The Diary of a Dutiful Son" (a delightful work published in London some thirty years ago), "is the ultimatum of all thorough-going reformers; and if they stop short of it, they are outbid. 'Nil moderatum vulgo gratum.' If there remains any extravagance greater than what has yet been proposed, he who proposes it is sure to get the upper hand. O'Connell fought off Repeal as long as he could, knowing that there was no greater absurdity short of rebellion. Smith O'Brien did not stick at rebellion. O'Connell was outbid; and the master of fifty votes in Parliament sank like a bubble on water."

**Then and Now.** QUAIN old Thomas Fuller, in portraying Dr. William Perkins, a contemporary divine, says that "he would pronounce the word *damn* with such an emphasis as left a doleful echo in his auditors' ears a good while after." Again, he expounded and "applied so home" the commandments, as "almost to make his hearers' hearts fall down and hairs to stand upright." What would the good Thomas have thought had he listened to our modern orthodox preachers, from the lips of thousands of whom he might never hear the dolefully echoing word thundered, but uttered, if uttered ever, *sotto voce*, "with 'bated breath and whispering humbleness," in ears polite? Let us add, however, in behalf of such, that



even the severe Dr. Perkins, according to Fuller, in his older age altered his voice, and remitted much of his former rigidity, — “often professing that to preach mercy was the proper office of ministers of the gospel.”

**Hazlitt on Quakers.** THE brilliant essayist, William Hazlitt, who was a victim of the intensest and most unaccountable prejudices, had a strange antipathy to Quakers and Methodists. Of the former he says that they take every precaution and keep up a perpetual quarantine against the infection of other people’s vices or — virtues. “They pass through the world like figures cut out of pasteboard or wood, turning neither to the right nor left. Their ideas want airing: they are the worse for not being used; for fear of soiling them, they keep them folded up and laid by in a sort of mental clothes-press through the whole of their lives.” Again he says that “a Quaker poet would be a phenomenon.” Had the critic never heard of his contemporary, but six years younger than himself, — Bernard Barton? What would he have said had he known John G. Whittier? *He*, certainly, has never kept his ideas in “a mental clothes-press.” If there is any poet of our day who is filled with the holiest spirit of our age, who embodies its ideas and responds to its needs, who makes his power tell on his contemporaries in the direction of their highest and best thought, it is the author of “Voices of Freedom,” “Songs of Labor,” and “Snowbound.” It is because he lives in his time, sympathizes with its noblest forms of life, represents its loftiest ideals, and by his burning lyrics inspires it with faith, hope, and courage, — because the scenery of New England (whose charms he has sung with as passionate

fondness as Burns, who first fired his genius, ever sang of "auld Scotia's") everywhere lives in his verse, — that Whittier thrills the hearts of his countrymen, and kindles their affection to a greater degree than any other American poet.

In further disproof of Hazlitt's charge against the Friends, one might point to that tribune of the people, — that champion of the poor, the lowly, and the oppressed, — who in pleading their cause for forty years endured, as he said, measureless insult, and passed through hurricanes of abuse, — John Bright. Did his ideas "want airing," or did he ever suggest "a figure cut out of pasteboard," as he flashed and thundered in the British Senate?

**Ugliness.** "It is a terrible thing to be ugly," says George Dawson, the English lecturer. It is a hateful truth, but none the less a truth, that "unpresentable" people — men and women with repulsive physiognomies — have giants to contend with at their entrance upon life. If this be true of all ugliness, how must it be with the superlative degree of that quality, — an ugliness compared with which mere plainness or uncomeliness is beautiful? It is said that Ugo Foscoli, the brilliant Italian poet and prose-writer, was so ugly (notwithstanding his dandyish pretensions) that a jest upon it as a grimly patent fact became almost permissible. Once an acquaintance of his, who affected not to recognize him at first on entering a restaurant, apologized by saying that he had taken him for an orang-outang. Miss Fenwick, in a letter to Henry Taylor, published in that poet's biography, speaks of the great variety in the ugliness of Crabb Robinson, — a series of uglinesses in quick succession, one look

uglier than the one that preceded it, particularly when he was asleep. Dr. Parr, whose face had been disfigured by smallpox, was so ugly that Sir William Jones, one of his schoolfellows, said to him as they were walking together: "Parr, if you should have the good luck to live for forty years, you would stand a chance of overtaking your face!"

A man may be so ill-looking as to be the highest type and last expression of ugliness as truly as the Apollo Belvidere is the model of manly beauty; and yet intellect can redeem even such a face, and light it up with its own phosphorescent glow! When we discover mental power or moral loveliness, or both together, under a repulsive mask, the reaction in its owner's favor is proportional to our former dislike. "Qu'il est laid!" exclaimed the ladies of Paris, when they saw for the first time the actor Le Kain on the stage; "Qu'il est beau!" they exclaimed, as he proceeded with his wonderful personations: a hero stepped out of that coarse envelope. It was an ill-looking woman, with no charm for the senses, who by her music and her intellectual grace enslaved the world's greatest poet in his youth. "Well, I shall never think Dr. Goldsmith ugly again!" piquantly said Sir Joshua Reynolds's sister, after reading "The Deserted Village." The short, stumpy, sallow-faced, snub-nosed Dunning, who died in 1783, was the ugliest man of his day, and had a husky, repulsive voice, besides a nervous affectation which kept his head in a state of ceaseless oscillation; yet men forgot all his physical defects when he was delivering in Parliament one of his brilliant, witty, and sarcastic speeches, or making at the bar one of his rapid and powerful arguments. A profound lawyer, he is said to have been the first orator

of his time, and in spite of all drawbacks rose to the peerage.

It is a fortunate thing for some very ugly people that they are utterly unconscious of the fact. "He is such an amazingly ugly fellow!" said Dr. Johnson of Gibbon, and Boswell made the same complaint; yet the great historian was vain of both his face and figure.

**Mrs. Browning and Small Talk.** SOMEBODY says of Mrs. Browning, that she "was never known to make an insignificant remark." If this be true, it is anything but creditable to that poetess; for it is equivalent to saying that she was a kind of female Dogberry, — all wisdom, all gravity and dignity, and consequently all tediousness; in other words, that she never condescended, when she went into society, to leave the author at home, to come down from her stilts and engage in "small talk." But intellectual, and even over-intellectual, as Mrs. Browning was, — which made her poems works of pure imagination, or rather of pure phantasy, often mystical in conception and transcendental in speculation, instead of the utterances of a deliciously over-burdened soul speaking to our souls, — we cannot believe that the author of "The Grave of Cowper" and "The Cry of the Children" was one of those solemn owls of whom it has been said that —

"In arioso trills and graces  
They never stray,  
But gravissimo, solemn basses  
Hum away."

It has been finely said that "small talk is the small change of social life." We cannot exchange civilities without it. A man who cannot trifle at times, who is

above indulging in a jest or a remark about the weather, "who will not show his teeth 'i the way of a smile" under any provocation, has no business in society. He is as useless there as a statue. There are moments when "'tis folly to be wise," when a little nonsense is very acceptable; and the most unwelcome guest is one of those long-faced and sometimes long-eared "Sir Oracles" who frown at a pun, and by their mien and demeanor proclaim death to *la bagatelle*. Life is made up largely of trifles, and he who can trifle elegantly and gracefully is a valuable acquisition to the drawing-room and the fireside. "He is a Corinthian column in the fabric of society."

**What are Superfluities?** WHAT are necessities of life, and what are superfluities? It would be hard to name a subject on which men are more hopelessly divided in opinion than upon these questions. As no two persons see the same rainbow, so no two persons ever take precisely the same view of superfluities. To an anchorite, ninety-nine hundredths of the things which are essential to most men's well-being seem needless. To Diogenes, everything appeared superfluous but a drinking-cup; and even that he threw away when he found that he could drink out of his hand. King Lear, when on the brink of madness, thought that —

"our barest beggars  
Are in the poorest things superfluous,"

and that "man's life is cheap as beast's." On the other hand, the Roman poet Horace, after stating that Lucullus had five thousand military cloaks in his house, adds that that house is poorly furnished which has not many things that escape the owner's notice and are a gain to thieves.



Men of every condition in life can see with eagle eyes the needless expenditure and extravagance of men in higher ranks of society, but are blind as bats to the luxury of their own class. Every day we see men and women starving, in their own imagination, upon incomes which would enable other persons to roll in Sybaritic luxury. De Quincey says that he has known several persons with incomes of £20,000 a year who seriously thought themselves paupers! Lady Hester Stanhope, with an income of £2,700 a year, thought herself an absolute pauper in London, and so exiled herself to the mountains of Syria; "for how, you know," she would say pathetically, "could the humblest of spinsters live decently upon that pittance?" It was so in the days of old Rome. Appius, we are told, squandered in debauchery two and a half millions of dollars, and finding, on examination of his financial affairs, that he had only \$400,000 left of all his fortune, poisoned himself because he considered that sum too paltry to support life! No man with but \$1,000 a year ever heard with much sympathy or pity of the pecuniary straits and struggles of the man with \$5,000. To the man with the former sum it is so evident that one could, if he would, live in affluence on five times that amount, that it is impossible for him to commiserate a man who has such an income and yet fails to make the two ends meet; yet the man with a thousand a year grumbles at his lot as if it had never occurred to him that he is on a lofty pinnacle of affluence to the mass of his fellow-beings, to whom twenty dollars a week must appear such a princely income that he who complains of it must be an ingrate. "To the workingman with a large family to bring up on sixteen shillings a week," says an English writer, "it must always appear

more or less incomprehensible that a man who has a five pound note to dispose of every week of his life should be unable to retrench if he finds that he is living beyond his means: just as the man with five pounds a week will be puzzled to understand how a man can be such a fool as to run into debt and difficulty with an income of five thousand a year. Why does n't he sell off two or three of his horses, and do with half the number of his servants, and if necessary do with one house instead of two or three? The man who has always been used to occupy a house would feel it a grievous hardship to have to put up with a couple of rooms; he who lives in a house at a hundred pounds a year must generally find it extremely hard and unpleasant to be compelled to remove to a house at fifty in an inferior neighborhood: and yet both will find it difficult to realize that the occupant of a house at five hundred a year may experience exactly the same unpleasantness in having to retreat to one at two hundred and fifty, or that he who has always been used to two establishments will feel it a sore privation when circumstances compel him to put up with one."

The truth is, that upon this subject of necessities and superfluities our ideas "gang aft agley," — as Voltaire saw when, in a felicitous epigram, he spoke of *la superflue chose si nécessaire* ("the superfluity so necessary"). The words "luxury" and "superfluity" are purely relative. There is hardly an article now reckoned as indispensable to existence which was not once denounced as superfluous, — a luxury. Men were once put in the pillory in England for presuming to wear such a luxury as a shirt. When Sir Richard Steele was reproached by Whiston for having voted in the House of Commons contrary to his professed

opinions, he replied: "Mr. Whiston, you can walk on foot, but I cannot." A coach had become so essential to Steele, that, rather than want it, he would abandon some of his most cherished principles. While many persons to obtain the "superfluities of life so necessary" make shipwreck of fortune and principle, there are many also who are ruined by the reverse, — by a too feeble development of those desires to gratify which the mass of men are striving. A savage has few wants; but man in a state of civilization, especially at this close of the nineteenth century, is a highly complex being, with a thousand faculties, appetites, and tastes clamoring for exercise and satisfaction, and hence a thousand things which once were luxuries have become practically indispensable to him, that is, to his physical, mental, and moral well-being. So long as he does not live by bread alone, so long as he is advancing in culture, refinement, taste, so long will he require more and more of those so-called "luxuries" which the moralists of all ages have so often denounced as the bane of society, but without a craving for which he would relapse into Turkish contentedness, indolence, and apathy.

**His** A BINGHAMTON, N. Y., newspaper tells an "Nickels." amusing anecdote of a German lad recently arrived in this country. Having occasion one day to assert his positive knowledge of some matter under discussion, he declared that he knew it as well as he knew that he was living. "How do you know you're alive?" jokingly asked a friend. "I know it by my nickels," replied the young Teuton. The oddity of the reply provoked much laughter, till it was discovered that by his "nickels" he meant his five senses.

The incident reminds us of one told by a friend as having occurred in Waterville, Me., during the late Civil War. A Canadian Frenchman who lived there, being exasperated by a citizen who was a well-known sympathizer with the secessionists, said to him: "I will tell you what you are. You are a miserable one-cent-head". (copperhead)!

**Wine-  
Bibbing  
Parsons.**

IT is hard, in these "teetotal" and tea-drinking days to credit the stories told of the wine-bibbing habits of the English clergy a century and a half ago. It was at a party of a dozen parsons that the Earl of Sandwich won his wager, that not one among them had brought his prayerbook or forgotten his corkscrew. Who would now venture to portray in a painting a drunken orgy assisted by a clergyman? Yet the parson holds a conspicuous place in Hogarth's bacchanalian group of "Midnight Modern Conversation;" and who that is familiar with Fielding does not recall that conscientious clergyman, the Ordinary of Newgate, who when conversing all night with Jonathan Wild could not be prevailed upon to drink any liquor but punch, that being "a beverage nowhere spoken against in Scripture"? Even to-day the British clergy are far behind their American brethren in regard to the temperance reform. Too many of the former have the convivial tastes of the late Archbishop Whately, who cried out to the Bishop of Cork, when dining with him, "John Cork, don't *stop the bottle!*" — to which Cork replied, "I see your Grace is determined *to draw me out!*" A happier reply than this inspired by wine, witty as it was, was that made by a cold-water drinker, an American clergyman, Dr. Patton, of Connecticut. When he had refused to take several kinds of wine successively offered



him at a dinner-party of his reverend brethren in Edinburgh, the host said, as he pushed a fourth bottle against the Yankee minister's plate: "Come, you certainly can't decline *hock!*" Dr. Patton replied: "Why, certainly I can! I learned how to decline it at the Latin School, — *hic, hæc, hoc.*"

Deep as were the potations of the British clergy in the eighteenth century, they were temperate compared with those of the German in the sixteenth. During the ponderous conferences of the congress held in 1579 in Cologne, the doughty deliberations of which demanded continual moistening, the Bishop of Wurtzburg (if we may credit the historian Motley) consumed eighty hogsheads of Rhenish wine and twenty great casks of beer! Think of all this liquid guzzled in seven months! What *were* stomachs made of in those days?

**Piety that**      WHAT can be more significant of the Anglo-  
**"Pays."**      Saxon character, or rather one of its phases, than the title of a book by a leading English preacher, "Making the Most of Both Worlds," — that is, this and the next? What a cold-blooded, commercial view of religion! John Bull, if we may judge by this mouthpiece of his sentiments, has an eye to "the main chance," to the largest profit, even in his piety. Can a man thus serve two masters, — worship God acceptably, and have an eye all the time to the highest worldly enjoyment? Is not the man who tries to reap the most of selfish advantage from both worlds likely to cheat himself of the blessings of each? Such a Christian — if Christian he can be — will be very apt, we fear, to resemble the Parisienne in "*Le Paysan Parvenu*," who was heartily in love with virtue,



but so as not to be at enmity with vice, — “*aimant de tout son cœur la vertu, sans inimitié pour le vice.*” What a contrast between this gospel of spiritual selfishness and that of Mazzini, the Italian patriot and *littérateur*, in the following extract: “Seek not to isolate yourself. . . . You can save yourself only by saving others. God asks not, ‘What have you done for your soul?’ but, ‘What have you none for the brother souls I gave you?’ Think of these Leave your own to God and his law.”

**A Waggish Rogue.** WHAT a masterly and inexhaustible ingenuity is expended by sharpers in their tricks to dupe the poor gullible public! A tithe of it employed in an honest calling would, apparently, suffice to secure a good living. One of these “industrious chevaliers” advertised in a London paper that he would supply “a real sewing-machine, warranted to work,” on receipt of only one shilling, and then sent to each of his respondents an ordinary needle! Finding this “dodge” profitable, he hit upon another outlet for his energies. Householders troubled with smoky chimneys could be furnished with “a smoke-consuming apparatus which never fails to act,” by sending half-a-crown in stamps. Those who sent the stamps received in return a clay tobacco-pipe!

Gudgeons must abound, or the pikes would starve.

**Shelving old Ministers.** It is a crying complaint of our times that a clergyman is thought superannuated after he has passed fifty, — that is, when generally he is just in the prime of his powers. Churches of all denominations want young pastors. Why is this? Can the newly-fledged preacher possibly have the learning, experience, wisdom,

tact, *ceteris paribus*, which the gray-headed preacher has acquired by years of study, sermonizing, trial, and pastoral toil? Our forefathers thought not. When the pastor of the First Congregational Church in Boston died, in 1667, the church resolved not to supply his place by a young man, and accordingly elected Mr. Davenport of New Haven, then seventy years old. What desperate old fogies!

It is sometimes urged in defence of the modern practice, that old clergymen do not keep abreast with the times and in sympathy with the current thought, that they do not read the latest books and lead the way in movements of progress and reform; but is this charge just? "Old" is a relative term, more fitly used of one man at forty than of another at sixty or even seventy. Many of the liveliest, most receptive, most energetic clergymen we know, men who keep all the windows of their minds open to new ideas, are past sixty. Of course there are languid, spiritless old men in the ministry as in all other callings; but old age found them — it did not make them — such. If it was one of this stamp whom a venerable father in Israel is said to have taken by the whiskers and warned, "You had better dye them, for if you leave your present charge nobody will call you with such a badge of advanced life," — the advice was not the sagest. It was his brains that needed dyeing, not his "mutton chops."

**Genius and Adversity.** It is a familiar saying that adverse circumstances are an advantage to a beginner in life; that genius thrives best, not when dandled in the lap of luxury or petted by society, but in loneliness and poverty. Opposition, we are told, only tests and proves the

mettle of the determined man. Kites fly against, not with the wind. "The eagle, of all birds," says De Quincey, "would be the first to flutter and sink, plumb down, if the atmosphere should make no resistance to his wings."

There is a large vein of truth in this; but we fear that in many cases the "sweet uses of adversity" are as fabulous as "the precious jewel in the head" of the "ugly toad," to which Shakespeare has compared it. Men of titanic force will overcome all obstacles, no doubt, — sometimes even convert them into stepping-stones by which to climb higher; but would not the same force achieve far finer results if the obstacles were wanting? Would Goethe, for instance, have been the many-sided man he was had he been cramped and tortured as Jean Paul was, or "cribbed and confined" as were Schiller and Heine, by poverty? What was it but his financial independence that gave to Goethe books, access to all circles and classes of society, the means of travel, perfect command of his time, and all the other facilities he enjoyed for a rare and expansive culture? Time, his long life, was a necessary element in Goethe's culture and achievements; and a long fight with adverse fortune, even if crowned with victory, would have cheated him of years for literary labor, and probably have shortened his life. Think what the sight of foreign lands did for him! Who has forgotten his exclamation when he first gazed upon that paradise of art whose scenery, pictures, statues, architecture, he had so passionately longed to behold, — Italy? "This day," he cried, "I was born anew!"

Again, would not Burns's genius have been broadened, deepened, and enriched by larger opportunities of culture; by books, travel, scientific knowledge, and observation of

man and Nature in other countries? No doubt that, as Richter says, under golden mountains many a spiritual giant lies buried; but who can doubt that "there have been many more in this world buried in mud-holes and ditches"?

**Sympathy with Scoundrelism.** AMONG the vexed questions in morals, there is hardly one more puzzling than that which relates to the causes of our sympathy with successful scoundrelism. Why is it that all the world violates the clearest principles of practical ethics, and suffers sympathy with clever scampishness to overrule the instinctive verdict of conscience? Why do we half love the sack-swaggering Falstaff, in spite of his intemperance, swaggering, and lies, and sympathize with every practical joker rather than with his innocent victim? Why do we secretly extol the big rogue who robs a Wall Street broker of a million and a half dollars before his very eyes, or the colossal knave who swindles by wholesale, adroitly jewing his creditors out of fifty or a hundred thousand dollars, and at the same time despise the thief who is arrested for petty larceny, as a contemptible fellow? Why is it that, as Porteus affirms, —

"One murder made a villain,  
Millions a hero"?

The secret of this apparent anomaly we believe to be this: it is not with the *crime*, as such, that men sympathize, but with the *success*, or rather with the heroic qualities, the energy, or the ingenuity which the crime represents. All the world over there is a tendency in men to worship success. We may censure this feeling and call it hard names; but an instinct that is so natural and so universal must



have its roots deep in human nature, and cannot be altogether bad. In the successful scamp we admire the success, and forgive the scampishness for the sake of the vital force that lies behind it. If, as Seneca has declared, the grandest spectacle which the gods can behold is a virtuous man struggling with adversity, is it strange that *men* should sympathize even with a criminal who exhibits almost superhuman pluck and endurance, and wins his object in spite of ever-varied and baffling obstacles? It is not according to the evil which they have or have not done that men are estimated, but according to their serviceableness and capacity. "Goodish" men are despised the world over. A man to whom Nature has been niggard of brains, and who is therefore powerless for good or evil, is sneered at as "an innocent." This is not because, as Archbishop Trench too readily concludes, men assume that the first and chief use of the intellectual faculties is to do hurt; but because the feeble in intellect are alike incapable of perpetrating great mischief and of doing great good. It is positive, not negative qualities, that give us our place in the world. *Magnæ virtutes, nec minora vitia*, says Sir Thomas Browne, "is the poesy of the best natures." Even questionable prima donnas and actresses of equivocal character are half deified in drawing-rooms and newspapers in virtue of their sweet voices or electric elocution; and greenbacks and bouquets shower on them from hands which, except for those wondrous gifts, would point at them "the slow, unmoving finger of scorn." When the audience-room of Pope Clement rang with furious outcries for justice on Benvenuto Cellini, who, if half-a-dozen murders could give a title, as richly deserved to swing from the gallows as any person that ever dangled from that unlucky



wood, his Holiness replied: "All this is very well, gentlemen. These murders are bad things, — we know that. But where am I to get another Benvenuto, if you hang this one for me?"

There is point as well as piquancy in this answer, the logic of which has commended itself to other dignitaries besides Popes. Cellini had murdered a man who had slain the artist's brother in self-defence; and when an inn-keeper, whose horse Cellini had overridden, kept the saddle and bridle in retaliation, he buried his dagger in the spine of the man's neck. Yet the Pope, while he condemned the murderer, could not help admiring the artist; and even with Michael Angelo, who was one of Nature's noblemen, Cellini's irascibility and profligacy did not prevent his being on terms of intimate friendship. Of course, this is an extreme case; and the extreme imaginativeness of a brain which had a fibre of insanity in it, near which genius often lies, might have been urged by Cellini's friends in extenuation of his conduct. But, to take a milder illustration, is it strange that the world should prefer to listen with ravished ears to the soul-entrancing strains of a Grisi or Parepa-Rosa, even were their moral characters somewhat questionable, than to hear the screams of a tenth-rate cantatrice, who, though boasting all the virtues under heaven,

"Cracks the voice of melody,  
And breaks the legs of time"?

Would not any man, saint or sinner, prefer a nicely-fitting pair of boots made by an immoral cobbler, to a pair of the most pious man's manufacture which are clumsily shaped and give him corns? Would not any judge of elocution

go farther and pay more to hear a reading of "Hamlet," "Othello," or the "Merchant of Venice" by the elder Booth, in spite of his intemperance, than to hear the bellowings of a teetotal Forrest? Will not the exquisite melodies of "Childe Harold" be always more keenly enjoyed by even the devoutest man of taste, than the rhymings of moral poetlings whose only boast is that their verse is "poor, but pious"?

The truth is, that the world has always acted upon this principle, and it is only indolence or cowardice which has left our ethical teachings so far behind the universal and necessary practice. Even as children, we half despise the "good boys" of story-books, and delight privately in Don't Care; for sad as was the end to which Don't Care came, he at any rate came to *some* end, whereas most persons come to *none*. He at least showed vitality, free, unconstrained, independent vitality — that Don't Care!

**The Blessings of Poverty.** ONE of the most ridiculous things seen in this paradoxical world is a rich man declaiming upon the blessings of poverty. There are some men who are eloquent upon the advantages of the *res angusta domi*; who contend very gravely that it is "a big thing" to be poor, that Want is the mother of the virtues, that all the spiritual graces are best developed under her influence, and that it is only in the school of adversity that the lessons of a manly education are learned. Such a doctrine we continually hear preached — by whom? Nine times out of ten by the pets of wealth and easy fortune; men who in their babyhood were fed with silver spoons, and slept on beds of down, who from their youth up have luxuriated in the finest clothes, the daintiest fare, the most

gorgeously furnished rooms, and who at any time have hardly to breathe a wish touching their personal comforts ere it is gratified. It is, in short, anywhere but in the rugged school of experience that they have learned the doctrine they are so fond of expounding.

It is very easy to descant upon the blessings of poverty while sitting of an evening before a ruddy fire, well-slipped and gowned, in an elegant, luxurious room, with fine Brussels to tread upon, long flowing curtains to exclude the air, rich sofas to lounge upon, and the recollection of \$100,000 in United States, and other good stocks. We think that under such circumstances we could write a most convincing essay on the blessings of poverty; but then we should n't like to be called upon to taste any of the blessings, or to demonstrate practically the truth of our doctrines, in our own experience. Seriously, when we see our platform lecturers and homily-mongers, who prate so mellifluously of the importance of poverty and destitution as a means of grace, clothed in "hodden gray" and rejoicing in the coarse fare of the pauper instead of sporting the finest of broadcloth and the snowiest of linen, uttering their admonitions from libraries adorned with the costliest treasures of art, and basking in the wreathed smiles of beauty in fashionable drawing-rooms, we shall begin to believe that elegance and refinement are incompatible with moral elevation, and that when men become virtuous "ginger will no longer be hot in the mouth," and "cakes and ale" will disappear.

**Trials of a Country Editor.** NEXT to "school-keeping and boarding round," about the hardest task a man can attempt in this world—or, at least, the one demanding

the largest stock of patience — is publishing a country newspaper. *Haud inexpertus loquor.* A volume might be filled with the complaints of subscribers.

For example: A. likes a quarto sheet; B. declares he could never get the “hang” of one. C. admires the neatness and elegance of fine type; old Mr. D. abhors a paper that requires a microscope. E. wonders that you insert so few sentimental and ghost stories; F. detests your abominable lies and cock-and-bull tales. G. would like to see an exact and minute account of Congressional and Legislative proceedings; H. curses the journal that contains the endless hodge-podge doings and undoings of selfish partisans and demagogues. I. will not subscribe because your news department is so contracted; J. takes the city dailies, and has read your stale items a week ago. K. has a mortal antipathy to a paper crowded with riots, horrible accidents, breach-of-promise trials, garrottings, and other demoralizing statements; L. is “mad as a hatter” because his miserable paper had no account of that bloody murder last week. M. detests your stereotyped advertisements; all N. wants of the paper is to see what’s for sale. O. threatens to discontinue because your editorials lack ginger, and don’t lash public and private vices; P., a leaden-head, points you to a prosy contemporary, and wonders that you never moralize like him. Q. hates the radical temperance men; R. holds in perfect contempt the dastard editor who is too cowardly to avow his abhorrence of rum-selling. S. demands long and solid articles; T. wants the close-packed essence, and not the thin diluted mixture. U. extols a journal that reaches him a “week before it is printed;” V. tells you he is not yet quite green enough to be gulled by such trickery. W. is astonished that you



print no extracts from Talmage's sermons; all that X. cares for is fun. Y. is on fire because you will not deduct more for advance pay; Z. is amazed at the impudence of a publisher who duns him for five years' subscription, and yet objects to being paid in cider and rotten apples.

**A Good Story-Teller.** ONE of the best story-tellers in the country forty years ago was Henry Giles, who, before his health broke down, was also one of the most brilliant lecturers. Among the good things he used to tell, was his account of a strong-minded woman whom he met with in a railway trip to the West. She seemed to know everything, and was ready to talk about everything she knew. If a sailor spoke of a voyage, she understood the management of a ship, the art of navigation, and all the particulars of geography. The conductor found her posted up in the mysteries of curves and levels; and a director who was in the car discovered that she was deep in the science of finance. With a young mother she was at home in the article of babies; with a schoolmistress she discussed the subject of female education; with a womans-rightser she was potent on woman's wrongs. She argued theology with a clergyman; she puzzled a Philadelphia lawyer on Blackstone and the Constitution; she floored a politician, and covered him with the wreck of the Baltimore platform. "I was cautious," continues Mr. G., "and talked with her only on metaphysics. She did not like Kant. She thought he made an absurd distinction between the *object* and the *subject*, and the ignorant, she maintained, will long continue to do so; but when they become better informed, they will put the *subject* into the *object*, and the *object* into



the *subject*; and when they achieve the enlightenment of absolute cognition, they will then comprehend the great fact that there is neither *object* nor *subject*. I asked her what she thought of Mr. Emerson. 'Oh, Ralph Waldo,' said she, 'I rejoiced in for a time; he was very tolerable for his day, but I have outgrown him. He answered well enough for my opening studies, was guide sufficient for the struggles of my weakness; but to my mature powers he is superficial, to my enlarged experiences he is commonplace. He *accepts the universe; I criticise it*. I read his little books occasionally still; but as to any intimate communion, I have shaken hands with him long ago.'

Mr. Giles was a "good hater," and was always wittiest when denouncing some body or thing. Some years ago he made a visit to the West, about the time that Professor Marsh's "Lectures on the English Language" made their appearance from the press. In the course of a conversation with us one day upon the politicians and authors of the day, Mr. G. criticised the "Lectures" with great severity, especially the style and the disproportionate space given to the discussion of some petty topics. Among other things he said: "Opening the book at random, what subject do you think first arrested my attention? Sixteen mortal pages upon the meaning of the word *grain*! As if a man, being called upon to write a treatise upon the Animal Kingdom, should *expend his labors upon the toe-nail of a mosquito*!" Upon some one announcing that Henry Wilson had just been elected U. S. Senator by the Legislature of Massachusetts, he exclaimed: "Is it possible? Henry Wilson United States Senator from Massachusetts! God of heaven! when I think of such things, I just want to lie down in the mud and die!"

**Repeating Sermons.** WHY do not our preachers repeat their best sermons oftener? Would it not be a positive gain if they would write fewer discourses and bestow more pains on their delivery? Men do not complain of Gough or Wendell Phillips because they repeat the same lecture a hundred times. Whitefield preached the same sermon to scores of audiences, and never reached the full height of his oratory till he had delivered it forty times. Chalmers wrote few sermons, but delivered them again and again, and doubtless with increased power and unction at each repetition. The fact that a sermon has deeply moved a congregation is the strongest possible argument why it should not be put into "the barrel."

There was much force in the remark made some few years ago by a distinguished divine from another city, who preached in Boston during one of the anniversaries. Several hundred ministers flocked to hear him, and were electrified and delighted. In the afternoon he preached in an adjoining town, and was followed by a hundred who heard the same sermon. Once more he preached it in the evening, and again on the next day. At last his clerical brethren remonstrated: "We have come to hear you four times, and you have given us every time the same discourse. Is that your whole stock?"

"My brethren," was the reply, "did you ever hunt deer?"

"Yes," answered several voices.

"Well," said he, "if you had a gun that always brought down the game, and you saw a splendid high-antlered buck just before you, would you lay aside your trusty rifle for a fowling-piece that might do execution and might not?"

**A Midnight Assassin.** READER, did you ever fight with a mosquito — not for five or ten minutes, nor half an hour only, but a regular pitched battle, lasting from midnight till daybreak? And after having exhausted all your powers in the fray, did you leave the field without being perfectly satisfied that your enemy was invincible? If so, you must be better skilled in the tactics of mosquito warfare than we are. A few nights ago we had a long and desperate conflict with one of these blood-thirsty wretches, and we speak advisedly when we say that we would rather be forced to cut our way through a body of Southern “rebs,” even Ku Kluxers, than again endure the horrors of such a fight.

We had just retired to rest, and sleep was gently descending on our eyelids, and gradually and deliciously overclouding our faculties, when our vagabond enemy, who had secretly effected his entrance into the room, lit on our forehead, and piercing it with his keen proboscis roused us suddenly by a most diabolical sting. Half asleep and half awake, we impatiently jerked our head, and knocking it violently against the bedpost put the assassin for a moment to flight. But it was only for a moment; for scarcely had we composed ourselves to sleep, when we heard a low buzzing in our ears, and immediately after felt his atrocious tube again perforating our face, from which he was sucking up blood, without so much as the civility of “by your leave.” Our nerves were now acquiring a preternatural irritability, and, shaking off our drowsiness, we determined to crush the villain summarily and without mercy. Waiting quietly until he had again lit on our forehead and inserted his tube as deeply as possible, we cautiously and silently raised our arm, and were just hitting him, as we

thought, a thundering rap, when — plague on the luck! — off he flew, just in season to escape from the wrath of our descending fingers, the force of which spent itself on our own luckless skull.

This did n't provoke us a bit — no! we assure you, reader, *positively not a bit* — compared with the mortification of hearing him chuckle over the success of his adventure; for, as he wheeled off, he uttered a “buzz, buzz,” full of scorn and contempt, mingled with a note of exultation which vexed us beyond all endurance. The little imp repeated his visitations sundry times with the same success, and we could almost see him each time, as he dodged our ineffectual blows and flew away, laughing and capering, and singing in a contemptuous tone, “Don't you wish you could come it?” “Hit one of your size!” “You can't come the giraffe over me!” as if purposely to fret us to distraction.

At last a final and still more excruciating attack on the sensitive organ of smell put the last particle of patience to flight, and bouncing up from bed in a highly sublimated state of rage, we determined “not to give sleep to our eyes nor rest to our eyelids,” till we should have caught the lawless villain, and lynched him without judge or jury. Lighting a lamp, we proceeded cautiously and warily to search for the murderer of our sleep. It is needless to say — at least, to any who have attempted a similar task — that, though bed and bedstead, carpet and curtains, wall and window, bureau and dressing-table, chair and sofa, were carefully inspected, not the slightest trace of the vampire could be found. He was “lying low” in some snug place, and doubtless grinning with malignant delight at the idea of having feasted on our life-blood, while he

was rubbing his claws and sharpening his bill, preparatory to another attack. After a vain search of some twenty minutes, during which we looked into every nook and corner without finding hide or hair of our tormentor, and nearly broke our neck in exploring the ceiling from a chair and table, we gave up the attempt as hopeless, and again sought our couch with the fond conceit that he had bid us "good-night," or, at least, that we might from long sleeplessness fall into a slumber so profound that we should not be awakened even by his perforations.

Vain hope! Hark! A gentle and barely audible murmur in a distant corner of the room, becoming by degrees a little louder and louder, and waxing eventually into the old, familiar, long-drawn hum! It came upon our ear like a knell! Escape was impossible; our doom was sealed. A moment of agonizing suspense followed, and again we felt the pest promenading on our face, leaving an intolerable itching wherever he trod; and again he thrust the murderous tube deep into our cheek, inflicting the keenest stinging pain. Flesh and blood could stand it no longer. Jumping out of bed into the middle of the room, we chased the imp about the premises for half an hour in a perfect frenzy of rage, which nothing but his heart's blood could have appeased; when suddenly we lost sight of him, and sinking upon a lounge from sheer exhaustion, fell into a profound sleep, from which we awoke at daylight to recollect that — a mosquito is invincible!

**Mystery in Religion.** IN re-reading that remarkable book, which so many persons have found full of original, suggestive, and stimulating thought, — "Amiel's Journal," — I was struck with the following observations. Consider-



ing that their author was a pre-eminently "liberal" thinker, to whom no suspicion attaches of the slightest "orthodox prejudice," in fact, a sceptic, — the sentiments must be deemed full of weight and significance.

"The efficacy of religion," says Amiel, "lies precisely in that which is not rational, philosophic, nor eternal. . . . The philosopher aspires to explain away all mysteries, to dissolve them into light. It is mystery, on the other hand, which the religious instinct demands and pursues; it is mystery which constitutes the essence of worship, the power of proselytism. When the cross became the 'foolishness' of the cross, it took possession of the masses. And in our own day, those who wish to get rid of the supernatural, to enlighten religion, to economize faith, find themselves deserted, — like poets who should declaim against poetry, or women who should decry love. . . . It is the forgetfulness of this physiological law which stultifies the so-called liberal Christianity."

**The First Novel.** WHICH was the first novel in our language? If "Robinson Crusoe" may be regarded as a novel, it was the first, having been published in 1719. But this charming tale hardly exemplifies, perhaps, what we mean by the term; and if so, Richardson may therefore be considered as the true discoverer of this boundless realm of literature, which has since been so widely explored.

"Pamela," Richardson's first work, appeared in 1741; and if, as the poet Gray believed, the most paradisaical of earthly pleasures is to lounge upon a sofa and "read eternal new romances of Marivaux and Crebillon," what a dreary world, comparatively speaking, must ours have been before that epoch! Sir Charles Grandison had not then

bowed over the hand of Harriet Byron. Tom Jones had not exposed the foibles of Philosopher Square, nor Parson Adams prided himself on his sermon against vanity. Uncle Toby had not yet let the "poor devil" of a fly out of the window, or arranged his batteries of miniature cannon at Shandy Hall. The Vicar of Wakefield had not found a convert to his views on monogamy in Ephraim Jenkinson, nor Moses been overreached in trade by the same sharper. Dominie Sampson had not uttered his memorable exclamation, "Prodigious!" or indulged in the sole laugh of his life, so fatal to his landlady. Samuel Weller had not been shut up four and twenty hours in a public "conveyance" with a "vidder," nor had the world heard of that "poor, lone, lorn creature," Mrs. Gummidge, with whom "everything goes contrary." What *did* men do before Richardson's time to amuse themselves on rainy days, or how did the ladies console themselves for the lack or loss of a lover?

**A Fallacy Pricked.** A WRITER in that able Chicago journal, "The Open Court," combats with great vigor the popular cry that the poor in this century are continually growing poorer in the essentials of happiness, that industrial progress increases and intensifies poverty, and that hence our modern civilization is a failure. He shows that in England the proportion of pauperism to population was nearly twice as great in 1846 as in 1876, and more than four times as great in 1803 as in 1888. Though the population of England has doubled in the last sixty years, the number of vagrants arrested annually in London has not increased. Again, trustworthy official statistics show that the consumption of tea, sugar, cheese, butter, bread, ham,

eggs, and other common articles of food has increased enormously out of proportion to the increase in population — a fact due to the great increase of consumption by the poor, to whom what once were almost unattainable luxuries have now become daily necessities of life. Then, again, the great improvements which have been made in draining, paving, lighting, and cleaning the streets of modern towns have inured chiefly to the benefit of the poor; and it is they, too, who have been chiefly benefited by the multiplication of asylums and hospitals. Nearly all the great inventions and discoveries of the age have contributed more to the happiness of the poor than to that of the rich.

During the French revolution of 1848, M. Garnier Pages, the French statesman, was addressing a large and stormy meeting of workmen in Lyons, when he was interrupted by an *ouvrier*, who exclaimed that “the time had come for cutting off the coat-tails of the manufacturers.” — M. Pages quietly responded: “No, it is a question not of shortening the coat of the capitalist, but of lengthening the blouse of the workingman.” He might have added, that, metaphorically speaking, the blouse had already been not only lengthened again and again, but also improved in material and texture.

**The Abuse of Newspapers.** THE late A. W. Kinglake, the brilliant author of “Eothen,” made a characteristic remark one day on newspaper reading. A gentleman said to him:—

“I suppose, Mr. Kinglake, you knew Mr. —, when you were in the House of Commons?”

“Yes, yes, I knew him, — a clever man till he destroyed his intellect.”

“ Good heavens ! how ? surely not — ”

“ Destroyed his intellect,” continued Kinglake, “ by reading the newspapers.”

This cynical saying points to a real and serious evil of our times. Of course, no intelligent man can afford to dispense with the newspapers. Our daily and weekly journals are contemporary history, — not accurate by any means, but still history. They are mirrors of the age ; they are telescopes, which bring the most distant things near ; they are trumpets, which collect and bring within hearing all that is said throughout the globe ; they are libraries, containing the quintessence of thousands of books, magazines, and reviews. Often a newspaper article, contributed by some leading scientist or scholar, contains the condensed results of years of patient and systematic observation, reading, and thinking. R. W. Emerson once said to me that he hesitated to destroy the smallest piece of a newspaper, before looking at both sides of it, lest it should contain some thought or fact or verse worthy of preservation. To students in every department of knowledge the newspaper is indispensable. As Mr. Hamerton has said, the mind is like a merchant’s ledger, — it requires to be continually posted up to the latest date. Even the last telegram may have upset some venerable theory that has been received as infallible for ages. On the other hand, there is no doubt that the blessing of which we have spoken is egregiously abused, — that thousands swamp their brains in a sea of newspaper reading.

Instead of thinking for themselves, on the great political, social, economic, and religious questions of the day, the great majority of men let the daily or weekly journal do their thinking for them. In half an hour, while sipping

their coffee or tea, they have learned not only what subjects are agitating the world of politics, theology, science, or letters, but what opinions they ought to hold regarding them. Instead of reacting upon what they read, challenging the assertions made or the conclusions drawn, their minds are mere passive recipients, conduit-pipes through which day after day a stream of news, gossip, jests, and ready-made opinions runs, without making a more permanent impression than water upon a waterspout.

We believe that newspaper reading, instead of being abortive, may be utilized so as to be of permanent profit. Every good newspaper in the course of a year contains hundreds of valuable articles — essays, lectures, disquisitions, poems, extracts from new or old books, reviews, or magazines, etc. — which are of lasting interest, and which should be cut out and preserved in envelopes or scrap-books, for future re-reading or reference. This, we are told, was a practice of the historian Bancroft. A great newspaper reader, he rarely took up one without finding in its columns something which he deemed worthy of preservation; his encyclopædias were immense collections of newspaper articles which had been pasted into his scrap-books under the topics to which they referred. Next to the enjoyment of some sterling classic or an epoch-making book by a modern thinker, we know of no greater pleasure than the reading of such a collection when carefully made. To a writer it is invaluable. Often when he is at a loss for a topic or for ideas, — on the verge of mental bankruptcy, every draft made on his brain being protested, — a terse extract into which some thoughtful and suggestive writer has squeezed the results of his maturest experience, observation, and reflec-



tion will give a stimulus to the brain that will almost instantly break the ice in which one's ideas are congealed, and make them roll upon paper in a flood.

**A Deathless Soldier.** WHEN that brilliant orator, Sargent S. Prentiss, was a boy at school, he read and re-read Lemprière's Classical Dictionary with such delight that he almost knew it by heart. In after life he used to say that Lemprière was unrivalled as a means of giving interest and effect to a stump speech. When all other illustrations were powerless, he never knew the shirt of Nessus, the labors of Hercules, or the forge of Vulcan to fail in bringing down the house. Like Coleridge's two illustrations, — the image of a man sleeping under a manchineal tree and the case of Alexander killing his friend Clitus, which the poet in his youth used as illustrations which Providence had bountifully made inexhaustible in their applications, — no emergency could by any possibility arise to puzzle the Mississippi orator, but one of Lemprière's stories would come to the rescue.

Do not some preachers hold a similar opinion regarding certain pet illustrations which they have found apt and effective; and is it not about time to pension off, or at least to grant a furlough to, some of the seedy ones that bear the scars of long and honorable service? For example, there is the anecdote of the old soldier of Napoleon, who said to the surgeon who was probing his wound: "Cut deeper, and you'll find the Emperor." The story is a striking one, and serves happily to point a moral; but may not one tire of the aptest illustration if he hear it often, as the partridge-loving French abbé tired of the *toujours perdrix* at his meals? There was a time when I

could hardly hear sermons for two Sundays in succession, without hearing of the old grenadier; he was already an old acquaintance when my pastor introduced him. He (my pastor) went to Europe, and the Rev. Dr. T. preached with much ability in his place. To the doctor's credit be it said that he preached a considerable number of discourses without once resurrecting my old friend the grenadier; but the inevitable came at last, and I preserved my gravity as well as I could. Then Dr. G., from a neighboring church, supplied our pulpit for a single day; and for the first twenty minutes of his morning discourse I was foolish enough to fancy that I had escaped from the customary illustration; but, lo! the old mustache marched in at last, and with as much formality and stateliness of step as if he had never figured in any pulpit before. How many times I have encountered him in other churches, and in books, newspapers, and magazines, it is needless to say.

“Qui me délivra des Grecs et Romains?” cried the classic-ridden Frenchman. Who will deliver me from the old grenadier? say I. He clings to me as the old man of the sea clung to Sinbad the sailor. I am as tired of him as Dr. Johnson was of another hackneyed story, when he threatened to knock down any one who should speak to him of the Second Punic War. *Parce, precor!* brethren of the pulpit. Give us, if you please, Canute and the ocean, the eyeless fish of the Mammoth Cave in Kentucky, the “mills which grind slowly,” the Chicago cow and the lamp, the low watershed which divides the raindrops that run ultimately into the Gulf of St. Lawrence from those that run into the Gulf of Mexico, or any other of the exhausted and superannuated veterans of illustration, but let the old grenadier be discharged from service.

**A Considerate** MORALISTS have said a great deal about the "Cabby." danger of judging by appearances, but an incident which occurred some time ago in Paris illustrated it more vividly than the most eloquent homily.

The Parisian cab-drivers, it is well known, are the most reckless of reins-handling Jehus. They drive with a loose rein, often letting their horses fall for want of proper care, and pulling now to one, now to the other side of the road, in the most zigzag fashion. Foot-passengers are usually left to shift for themselves, and hence often have hair-breadth escapes from being knocked down. It is said that one day a cab-driver was actually seen pulling back his horse on his haunches to avoid running over a careless pedestrian who was in his way. *Credat Judæus Apella!* you will exclaim, if you have ever lived in the gay city. But wait. The crowd applauded the unprecedented act, whereupon "cabby" coolly explained that he had already demolished twelve persons that day, and that thirteen being an unlucky number, he had made this desperate effort to keep the list of his victims down to a round dozen!

**What are We** I THINK I am not squeamish about my food. **Coming to?** Like good Sir Thomas Browne, I am "of a constitution so general, that it comports and sympathizeth with all things." Like that honest knight, too, I "can digest a salad gathered in a churchyard as well as [one gathered] in a garden." I can eat a fig with not a whit less relish because I know that with a solar microscope I could see crabs and turtles crawling over its surface. Nevertheless, there is a point beyond which my dietetic catholicity does not go; and to be told that my food is saturated with poison is not helpful to digestion.

If one is ever disposed to become a pessimist, and to regard life as not worth living, it is when he is told of the adulterations in food that now incessantly menace it, and of the thousand and one other evils which the doctors say may render it miserable or cut it short. Not only is red earth mixed with our cocoa, ground liver and litmus with our coffee, iron sand with our sugar, bisulphuret of mercury or red lead with our cayenne pepper, chromate of lead with our mustard, copper with our pickles, rag-pulp with our butter, old combs with our calf's-foot jelly, — but the very air we breathe is saturated with germs, the water we drink may contain bacteria, the dimes and quarters we handle contain the seeds of zymotic plagues, and the very cat we stroke may have passed from a typhus patient's bedroom to bear on its fur the messenger of death to the next door. "And now we are told," says a London journal, "that we smell a Gloire de Dijon, at our peril, and that the azalea in our buttonhole may in the course of an hour impart hay fever to a carriage full of railway travellers."

What *are* we coming to? A few more such revelations, and the days when men could "eat, drink, and be merry" will be looked back upon with wonder and envy.

**The Antiquity of "Shoddy."** Is there anything new under the sun? Not only are our "modern" discoveries and "original" inventions asserted to be thousands of years old; not only are our jokes, proverbs, metaphors, etc., revivals of others long ago defunct, but even in their rascalities the thoughts of men have run in the same tram-roads. For example, the trickeries of the "shoddy" men, so common in our late war, were antici-

pated at Constantinople more than fourteen hundred years ago.

When in the reign of the Emperor Justinian, A. D. 593, his general, Belisarius, sailed from that city with a fleet of six hundred ships and a powerful army for the conquest of Carthage, he disembarked his troops on the coast of Messina that they might repose themselves for awhile from the fatigues of the sea. They there learned, as our own sailors too often learned, how, as Gibbon says, avarice invested with authority may sport with the lives of thousands which are bravely exposed for the public service. According to military practice, the bread or *biscuit* of the Romans was twice prepared in the oven (whence the term, *bis coctus*, — “twice cooked”), and a diminution of one fourth was cheerfully allowed for the loss of weight. To gain this miserable profit and to save the expense of wood, the prefect, John of Cappadocia, had ordered that the flour should be slightly baked by the same fire which warmed the baths of Constantinople; and consequently, when the sacks were opened, a soft and mouldy paste was distributed to the army. The effect of this unwholesome food, aided by the heat of the climate and season, was the production of an epidemical disease, which swept away five hundred soldiers. Was the rascally prefect punished? No; it is the old story. The indignant Belisarius complained to the emperor; Justinian heard and praised him; and the minister went — unwhipt of justice.

**The Hollow-  
ness of  
Fame.** A GREAT poet speaks of fame as “that last infirmity of noble mind;” yet it is remarkable how different is a noble mind’s estimate of it in youth and in age. The hollowness of fame has been



felt at the close of life most keenly by those who have drunk most deeply of its intoxicating draught. One of the most successful British premiers — he to whom that title was first given — long before he resigned office, said: "I am plagued with the thorns and glutted with the fruits of power." John Quincy Adams, a favorite of fortune and of fame, wrote at the end of his life this, with other similar lines, under his own portrait: —

"An age of sorrow, and a life of storm."

Harrison Gray Otis said in one of his last speeches: "As I look back over my existence, I see a pathway of mingled roses and thorns; but the roses have long since disappeared, and the thorns only remain." And this was a confession wrung from — whom? From one whose courtly manners and winning address made him a favorite in social circles; who had everything that almost every human being covets to-day, and if he has not inherited it is striving passionately to get, — health, strength, beauty, culture, eloquence, popularity, a fortune of \$800,000 (equal to \$3,000,000, perhaps, now), a palatial home on the most exquisite spot in Boston, and a seat in the United States Senate.

When we find men in humble stations envying such pets of fortune as those we have named, we are reminded of a felicitous fable contributed some forty or fifty years ago to the Boston "Daily Advertiser." A lobster, which had been caught by a fisherman and suffered the torture of boiling, was restored to life by a kind fairy and replaced in his native element. His friends gathered round him and eagerly asked how he had won his brilliant red coat. "Oh," he replied, "I only had to be boiled!"

Was it probably in a conscious burst of playful irritation that an eminent Englishman once declared that the chief advantage of worldly fame is to convince a man's friends that he is not such a fool as they take him to be, and to silence the voice of domestic malignity? Another Englishman's (the poet Campbell's) estimates of this bawble at different periods of his life present a vivid contrast. "I would die to-morrow," said he in his youth, "for such renown as that of Napoleon." Not many years after he had published his "Pleasures of Hope" his feelings underwent a striking revolution regarding that fame which, as he said, was "everything in the world to him" when he composed that poem. "Lord help us!" said he; "if one had the brains of Newton and Napoleon minced into his own individual celebrity, what would it be worth to him in a few years? Why, that a plaster image of his dead skull would be carried about on the head of some Italian boy, vending it in the company of cats and mandarins, and wagging their heads together!"

**The Profits of Authorship.** MR. EDWARD BOK, in a letter to the Boston "Journal," states, on what he considers to be good authority, that Whittier received latterly copyright on sixty thousand copies of his poems sold every year. The author of "Little Lord Fauntleroy," it is added, receives some \$23,000 a year from the sales of her writings. These facts are cheering to those who contemplate authorship, — who expect, as Charles Lamb says, "to suck their sustenance as sick people do, through a quill." Truly, the world has changed somewhat since John Milton sold his great epic poem for about a farthing a line, taking his principal pay in a draft on posterity, payable with com-

pound interest in the succeeding centuries; since Chatterton poisoned himself rather than starve to death; since the frequently *impransus* Johnson devoured his dinners like a famished wolf behind the screen in Cave's parlor, back of the shop, because he was too much out at the elbows to be "presentable" at a tradesman's table; since Savage, as if to show by vivid contrast the inferiority of civilized life to that when

" Wild through the woods the noble *savage* ran,"

roamed about the streets of London all night, for want of a shilling to pay for a lodging; and since Oliver Goldsmith was penning an animated romance on "Animated Nature," at just shillings enough per sheet to keep the catchpolls from his door!

The writers of to-day — or rather the master-workmen of the literary guild — have no occasion to complain that publishers drink wine out of authors' skulls, or to forgive Napoleon his crimes, as the poet Campbell did, on the ground that he had once shot a bookseller. It is gratifying to know that they are now masters of the situation; that *fama* is no longer a synonym for *fames*; and that not a few poets, instead of dancing attendance on publishers, are begged to print their songs. Nevertheless, it is well for the incipient author not to indulge in too rose-colored dreams regarding the income from his literary toils. To judge of the profitableness of authorship, we need to see a list of the blanks as well as of the prizes in the literary lottery. For every author who receives \$5000 a year from his publishers, there are five hundred who do not pocket a tithe of that sum.

**The Advantages of Coolness.** THERE are few qualities more essential to the public speaker than coolness and self-possession. That sensibility which is the source of eloquence makes an orator peculiarly sensitive to criticism and ridicule, and it is hard to affect indifference while writhing under the stings of a waspish tongue. Yet without the ability to do this, no man is fully qualified for the rough and tumble of modern political life.

Few men have better understood this than did Disraeli, some of whose retorts to the gibes and mock sympathy of the mobs at political elections were happy in the extreme. Being on one occasion repeatedly interrupted by hisses and groans when addressing the people at the hustings in Buckinghamshire, he told the audience that the best security for human happiness was a free interchange of ideas, — “a little more of that free trade in knowledge and argument which they had not permitted that day, when their most brilliant rhetoric was a howl, and their happiest repartee a hiss!” When some one in the crowd cried out, “Speak quick!” he replied: “It is very easy for you to speak quick, when you utter only a stupid monosyllable; but when I speak, I must measure my words. I have to open your great thick head. What I speak is to enlighten you. If I bawl like you, you will leave the place as ignorant as you entered it.”

In the House of Commons, when attacked by political opponents, “Dizzy” always contrived to preserve a most refreshing coolness. No man, when denounced or ridiculed by one of the leaders of that body, succeeded better in the assumption of perfect insensibility. Mrs. Pollock, a correspondent of Sir Henry Taylor, relates in a letter to him that she was present at a debate in the House one

night in March, 1867, and that while Bright flung his taunts at Disraeli, not a muscle of the latter moved: there he sat, with his lower jaw dropped, and his eyes glassy and stiff; maintaining the same listless look when he was described as "issuing flash political notes which would not pass at the bank, however they imposed on the inexperienced." When, again, Bright, pointing at him with his finger, said: "Look at him! Is he not a marvel of cleverness to have led that party so long, and to mislead it at last, as he is doing now?" — all eyes were turned on Disraeli, amid roars of laughter; but no effect was produced on the outward look of the sphinx — not so much as an eyelash gave way. It is a very great advantage to a public man if he can sustain a hail-storm of chaff as if he were made of heated iron, and even laugh when he is "scraped with moral oyster-shells." On the stump, a man may as well lose his tongue as his temper. Generally, a man who has a genius for sarcasm, which he delights in exercising, is exceedingly sensitive when he is himself ridiculed; but Disraeli was either an exception to the rule, or had a remarkable ability to conceal his feelings.

Better even than this real or feigned insensibility is the ability to keep one's good-humor when attacked, as did Lord Ashley at a certain English election some years ago, when, having received the back-handed benedictions of a part of the mob, he observed very calmly, that he "had received many compliments in the course of that meeting; one gentleman had called him 'long-nosed rascal.' Now, as to the nose part of the compliment I will say nothing, because that is a matter of fact; but as to the rascal part of the appellation, that is a matter of opinion." At another election, a young candidate, while addressing his constitu-



ents, tried hard, but tried in vain, to remember the speech which lay written out in his hat. "Get it out of your hat, governor," roared a voice in the crowd. "Thank you, gentlemen, so I will," replied the orator, and proceeded to pick out the speech and read it, amid much applause, not for his ability, but for his good-humor. A spirit like this is invaluable in a public speaker. Many a man whose skull is impregnable to argument is vulnerable to the charm of manner.

What a blessing it would be to some of our public men — especially the members of Congress — if they had the coolness and self-possession of Disraeli or the good-humor of Lord Ashley! Americans have been called a thin-skinned people; but many of our politicians seem to have no skin whatever. They are "raw" all over; and instead of meeting the attacks of opponents with good-humored banter or dignified silence, they reply with coarse personalities and superlatives of abuse. It has been justly said that no man should think of going into public life unless he can patiently bear abuse, unless in fact he has a cuticular relationship to the "armed rhinoceros," — a hide against which rifle-balls may be flattened almost without attracting his attention, and a sensibility so obtuse that the thrust of a lance may be mistaken for a mosquito bite. "Never until a man can smile with indifference while his finest sensibilities are rudely scraped with metaphysical sand-paper and moral oyster-shells, need he regard himself as qualified for lofty station. The Indian composedly sings the death-song when tortured at the stake; but the politician should be able to fiddle when not only himself but all his Rome is burning."

**Our School-boy Days.** THE illusions of memory and distance have often been descanted upon; and one of them is that by which we are led to believe that the happiest period of life was our bare-footed, bread-and-butter days. People may talk as eloquently as they please about the pleasures of after-life; but there are times when, weary of its "carking cares," they feel that they were blithest and most joyous of spirit in their schoolboy days. Never since have they felt that triumphant sense of life, that exultant transport of soul, in which they "reeked and rioted" when they first vaulted from their swaddling clothes into short coats, and strutted in boots. Few, then, were the ingredients necessary to their cup of happiness; they could carve felicity from a bit of pine wood, or fish for it successfully in a millpond. It is true that there was little agreeableness in hard lessons, less still in being scolded or flogged by frowning pedagogues for not getting them; but the play-ground and the holidays, — what is there comparable with them afterward?

Reader, have all the games, sports, and recreations of your melancholy manhood yielded you half the delight you once derived from kite-flying, marbles, ball-playing, and leap-frog? Have the most gorgeous and enchanting spectacles you have beheld at the theatres or elsewhere filled your soul so brimful of ecstasy as the first sight of Jack-o'-Lantern? Can you ever forget the violent throbbing of the heart with which you welcomed the metaphysical stranger; how you chuckled and crowed and clapped your hands with glee, as your dazzled eyes followed him through all the changeful figures of his fantastical harlequinade? Has any meteor, the most resplendent, since danced and gambolled over your head that was "any pump-

*kings*" in comparison? Have the most bewitching novels of Sir Walter Scott or Dickens or Collins thrilled and fascinated you with such strange, mysterious, entrancing delight as the stories of Bluebeard and Jack the Giant-Killer? Can you forget the curious wonderment with which you gazed on the Man in the Moon, — how you queried whether he, too, was made of green cheese, — and with what absolute precision you made out his face? Would you not gladly go back to the period when the rise of the green curtain revealed to you a real world; when the jokes of the clown at the circus were not stale, flat, and unprofitable, and the tricks of the juggler and the ventriloquist had not lost half their interest by being learned to be deceptions? Is it any satisfaction to you that you have read history till you doubt everything; that you no longer believe that Romulus was suckled by a wolf, and that Richard the Third was a monster of iniquity; that you know Robinson Crusoe to be a fiction? Are you a whit the happier because you have learned that William Tell did not shoot at the apple, and that he himself was probably a myth?

Ah, reader! we know full well your answer. Gladly would you command the secret of feeling as you once did; but, alas! every day has taken from you some happy error, some charming illusion, never to return. You have been reasoned or ridiculed out of all your jocund mistakes, till now, a full-grown man, you see things as they are, and are just wise enough to be miserable. Well might Lady Mary Wortley Montagu exclaim: "There is nothing that can pay one for that valuable ignorance which is the companion of youth; those sanguine, groundless hopes, and that lively vanity which makes up all the happiness of life.

*To my extreme mortification, I find myself growing wiser and wiser every day."*

**The Credulity of Scepticism.** It is said that when Marshal Duroc, an infidel, once told a tough story to Napoleon, expressing the opinion that it was true, the Emperor said: "There are some men who are capable of believing everything but the Bible."

Who does not to-day see all around him melancholy illustrations of this saying? There are hundreds of men among us who strain out the most microscopic gnats of Scriptural marvel, yet swallow the hugest camels of profane history without a qualm or objection. No juggleries of "spiritualism" stagger their credulity; but the miracles of the Bible are more than they can swallow. On the other hand, there are over-credulous people who are ready to believe any story or statement, provided it supports what they regard as orthodoxy. Motley tells us that, in the time of Philip II. of Spain, a so-called Revelation of James was proved to be spurious because it contained a large sprinkling of modern Spanish phrases; but a learned ecclesiastic contended that the Apostle, clearly foreknowing the date of the disinterment of his manuscript, had employed the language which would then be in fashion. There is another class of persons whose mental condition is more pitiful, perhaps, than that of the foregoing, — viz. "those inquisitive and restless spirits that take refuge from their own scepticism in the bosom of a church which pretends to infallibility, and, after questioning the existence of a Deity, bring themselves to worship a wafer."

**The Pleasures of the Table.** CHARLES LAMB, kind-hearted as he was, hated a man who could eat of dainties and

affect not to know what he was swallowing: "I suspect his taste in higher matters," said Elia. "Some people," said Dr. Johnson one night at supper, which he was enjoying with uncommon satisfaction, "have a foolish way of not minding, or pretending not to mind, what they eat;" and he added that a man who has no regard for his stomach will have no regard for anything else. Declarations of indifference to the choice of one's food, except in cases of what Liebig might call inferior oxygenability of constitution, are generally the merest affectation, — as much so as Byron's, when he dined at Rogers's on a potato and a little vinegar, and was discovered immediately afterward stuffing himself with a luxurious meal at a restaurant. What a contrast to the poet's affectation was Hazlitt's frankness, who did not hesitate to write to the woman of his "heart of heart" that he never loved her so well as when he thought of "sitting down with her to dinner on a boiled scrag-end of mutton and hot potatoes!"

Apropos to this subject, — why is it that Americans, who evidently have a keen appreciation of the pleasures of the table, generally rush through their meals in such hot haste? The celerity with which they bolt their food, though less offensive to the epicure than it was fifty years ago, still appalls a foreigner, and indicates a lack of discrimination among the dishes set before them. They appear to regard all edibles — salmon and canvas-back duck alike with codfish and baked beans — as means only of quieting a barking stomach (*lenientem stomachum latrantem*), and none of them as substances gifted with rich essences, subtle flavors, that require to be brought out and analyzed. Not so with our cousin John Bull. Whatever the quantity of edibles and potables he gorges at his meals, he never



despatches one of them — *ab ovo ad mala* — in a hurry. He sits down to his roast beef or “Southdown” as a warrior would sit down before a fortress, and proceeds calmly and carefully to discuss each slice as if he were fully sensible of its delicious qualities, and profoundly thankful to the gracious Providence that thus ministers to his deepest sensuous cravings.

**Eating an Index of Character.** THERE are few things by which character is more unmistakably betrayed than by a man’s choice of food and the manner in which he devours it. In his preference for coarse or delicate edibles, or lack of preference for any, — in the deliberate slowness or voracious quickness with which he consumes them, — traits of character otherwise hidden are revealed.

The dinners of a people are an infallible index of the national life. It has been justly said that there is a whole geological cycle of progressive civilization between the clammy dough out of which a statuette might be moulded and the brittle films that melt upon the tongue like flakes of lukewarm snow. In England, one of the tests by which the various parties in the state church are unerringly distinguished is the test convivial. For example, it is said that some years ago a clergyman in that country went to a hotel to order a dinner for a number of clerical friends.

“May I ask, sir,” said the waiter, gravely, “whether the party is High Church or Low Church?”

“Now, what on earth,” cried the clergyman, “do my friends’ opinions matter to you?”

“A great deal, sir,” rejoined the waiter. “If High Church, I must provide more wine; if Low Church, more wittles.”

We quite agree with a sensible writer that a fast eater may be a well-informed man, but he can never be a man of taste, simply because he lacks the gift of appreciation. He may swallow the contents of scores and hundreds or even thousands of books, and any given quantity of thoughts, facts, and statistics, as he gorges his food; but "he will not be a man that loves the beautiful, either in art or Nature. He will not care a whit about sunsets, or the choicest groupings of wood and water; and a panoramic exhibition, or the scenery of a playhouse, will suit him better than the delicate graces of a Leslie or a Newton. He may roar over the rich humor of a Smollett, because it is at the same time broad and obvious; but he will never detect the subdued quiet manifestation of the same quality in a Goldsmith, or relish the exquisite pleasantries or yet finer pathos of Charles Lamb." He may enjoy the labored and far-fetched jests of Mark Twain, but he will be blind to the shy and elusive pleasantries of Hawthorne; and as for noting the lights and shadows or feeling the more hidden beauties of poetry, how can it be expected of a person who can eat brook trout or English sole just as fast as he eats codfish, or partridge as hastily as he eats goose?

**A Caliph's Meals.** TOUCHING this matter of eating, the stories told by the old chroniclers and historians of the abnormal appetites of certain Roman and Oriental men of note fairly stagger belief. Gibbon tells of Soliman, a caliph in the eighth century, who died of indigestion in his camp near Chalcis, in Syria, just as he was about to lead an army of Arabs against Constantinople; he had emptied two baskets of eggs and of figs, which he swallowed alternately, and the repast was finished with marrow and sugar.

In a pilgrimage to Mecca, the same caliph had eaten with impunity, at a single meal, seventy pomegranates, a kid, six fowls, and a huge quantity of the grapes of Tayef. Such a statement would defy belief were not others of a similar character well avouched. Louis XIV. could hardly boast of an appetite as ravenous as Soliman's, but he would eat at a sitting four platefuls of different soups, a whole pheasant, a partridge, a plateful of salad, mutton hashed with garlic, two good-sized slices of ham, a dish of pastry, and finish with fruit and sweetmeats. Shade of Hippocrates! what *were* stomachs made of in those days?

It will surprise many admirers of a great English poet of this century to learn that he was a great eater. In the latest edition of Lamb's works it is stated that the person with whom the Lambs boarded at Enfield charged usually one shilling extra when they had a friend to dinner; but when Wordsworth was the guest, they charged one and sixpence. When Lamb remonstrated, saying: "He's a great poet," the practical landlord replied: "Don't know about the great poet, but he's a great eater!"

**Barbers; their Wit and Forbearance.** BARBERS are proverbial for their wit, which is often as keen as their razors, and which, like their razors, rarely draws blood. As iron by attrition with the magnet acquires some of its power of attraction, so does the barber, by associating continually with men of superior intellect, culture, and taste, catch a portion of their mental sharpness, polish, and urbanity. One may travel from *pole to pole*, and never encounter a stupid or ill-natured barber. Tailors, shoemakers, and other toilers who live a sedentary, lonely life are apt to be morose, melancholy, and atrabilious; but

the knights of the razor are social and peripatetic in their habits, and sunny, buoyant, and merry in their temperaments. Care may clutch at them, but as one of their admirers has said, they always contrive to slip through the old fellow's fingers. Old Age may lay his frosty finger upon their beards and write wrinkles on their brows, but they only laugh in the graybeard's face.

What a fund of piquant anecdote, witticism, and gossip the barber always has stored in the crannies of his brain! How like burrs do all the current jests, shrewd sayings of the day, and flying rumors of engagements, elopements, weddings, business failures, and deaths stick to him! What can be more felicitous than the devices by which he sometimes challenges public attention! Everybody has heard of the barber who headed his advertisement with a shrewd parody of Goldsmith, —

“ Man wants but little *beard* below,  
Nor wants that little *long*.”

Not less ingenious was the witticism of the Parisian artist, a hairdresser on one of the boulevards, who for his sign put up a picture of Absalom dangling by his hair from a tree, and Joab piercing his body with a spear. Under the painting was this terse epigram, —

“ Passans, contemplez le malheur  
D’Absalom pendu par la nuque;  
Il aurait évité ce malheur,  
S’il eut porté une perruque !”

which loses some of its piquancy when done into English, —

“ The wretched Absalom behold,  
Suspended by his flowing hair;  
He might have ’scaped this hapless fate,  
Had he chosen a *wig* to wear.”

It was by his beard that the same Joab took Amasa, when he plunged a poniard into his body, — a powerful argument for shaving.

Barbers are not only witty themselves, but they are often the cause of wit in other men. Thus Martial, the Roman poet, in speaking of a lazy *tonsor* of his time, complains that while he is tediously scraping the face of a customer another beard grows out, —

“Eutrapelas tonsor, dum circuit ora Luperci,  
Expingitque genas, altera barba subit.”

Are barbers so called because, all the world over, they are *not* barbarous? The patience and forbearance of barbers under provocation, considering that they so often hold men's lives in their fingers, are eminently noteworthy. Alfieri, the Italian dramatist, was so nervously sensitive that if, when his face was under the razor, one hair was pulled a little tighter than the rest, he would fly into a paroxysm of rage, draw his sword, and threaten to destroy the offender; yet such was his confidence in his barber that he would the next moment submit his throat again to the razor! Who does not admire the bold yet calm and dignified reply of a barber to a pimple-faced man, who with a loaded pistol in his hand compelled the tonsor to shave his beard, at the same time declaring that if the barber cut him in a single place he would instantly blow out his brains. After the barber had successfully accomplished the difficult and dangerous task, the man was asked whether he had not been terrified during the operation. “No, sir,” he replied; “for I had made up my mind the moment I drew blood to cut your throat.”



**Legal Niceties.** WE hear a great deal to-day about the hair-splittings of theology, but can they compare with those of the law? Lord Lyndhurst won his legal spurs by getting an indictment against his clients quashed, which described them as “proprietors of a silk and cotton lace manufactory,” — when, in fact, as he shrewdly objected, they were manufacturers of silk lace and of cotton lace, not of lace made of a mixture of silk and cotton.

A widow's debtor in London, who had been arrested as he was clandestinely embarking in a ship for India, was discharged because in the copy of a writ of *capias* which was served upon him a single letter was omitted. In the original writ the words were “Sheriffs of London,” in the copy “Sheriff of London” had been used, — a variance adjudged to be fatal. An eminent London conveyancer accidentally omitted one word in drawing a will, and thereby deprived a lady (the intended devisee) of estates yielding an income of \$70,000 a year. It is reported that by the improper use of the one word “thereof” in a recent will at Pittsburg, Pa., the sum of \$100,000 will be diverted from the intended legatee of the testator.

To say of an attorney that “he is no more a lawyer than the devil,” or that he is “a daffa-down-dilly,” is actionable; but whether to say “He hath no more law than the man in the moon” is doubtful, — for the law contemplates the possibility of there being a man in the moon, and he a sound lawyer. You may say with impunity of a man that “he is a great rogue, and deserves to be hanged as well as G., who was hanged at Newgate,” because this is a mere expression of opinion, and perhaps you may think that G. did not deserve hanging.<sup>1</sup> Again,

<sup>1</sup> T. Jones, 157.

to say of an attorney that "he has no more brains than a goose" is not actionable, according to that old legal luminary, Lord Coke. *Quære*: the reason of this distinction? Is it that the latter statements discredit the man only, while the first asperses his professional ability? It is hard to see how a lawyer can be worth retaining who can reply to the opposing counsel only by a hiss.

A singular law-case came recently for adjudication before a county court in Iowa. A tenant for years saw a meteorite fall on land that had been leased to him, and immediately dug it up and sold it. In conformity with a decision of a lower court in Iowa, in 1875, in which a meteorite that fell on a highway was adjudged to belong to the owner of the fee and not to the finder, the landlord in the first-mentioned case, who claimed the meteorite, won the suit. But, *quære*: if the meteorite was the property of the landlord, should he not have been liable for damages if, in its fall, it had smashed his tenant's house or skull?

A novel mode of proof was allowed in the New York Court of Common Pleas recently. In a suit brought to recover five hundred dollars paid for a violin, Edward Mollenhauer played on the instrument before experts while the court was taking a recess. After the recess he testified that in his opinion the violin was worth six hundred dollars.

**Religion for the Times.** EVERY great writer has some defect, and the admirer of Milton will acknowledge that his one evident lack — his one hopeless, irremediable want in literature and life — is humor. Yet there is one passage in his prose writings which is a startling exception to the almost universal gravity of his style. In that gorgeous

“Speech for the Liberty of Unlicensed Printing,” — the “Areopagitica,” — he gives us a masterly portrait, which is at the same time a scathing satire, of a kind of pietist of his time that is only too common in our own day. A wealthy man, addicted to his pleasure and his profits, would fain have the name, he says, to be religious; but he finds the practice of piety to be so troublesome that he resolves to give over toiling, and to find some factor to whose care and credit he may commit the whole managing of his religious affairs, — some divine of note and estimation that may be. “To him he adheres; resigns the whole warehouse of his religion, with all its locks and keys, into his custody; indeed, makes the very person of that man his religion, and esteems his associating with him a sufficient evidence and commendatory of his own piety. So that a man may say his religion is now no more with himself, but is become a dividual movable, and goes and comes near him, according as that good man frequents the house. He entertains him, gives him gifts, feasts him, lodges him; his religion comes home at night, prays, is liberally supped, and sumptuously laid to sleep, rises, is saluted; and, after the malmsey or some well-spiced beverage, and better breakfasted than he whose morning appetite would gladly have fed on green figs between Bethany and Jerusalem, his religion walks abroad at eight, and leaves his kind entertainer in the shop, *trading all day without his religion.*”

This keen sarcasm — which extorts from Dr. Richard Garnett, Milton’s latest and in many respects ablest biographer, the acknowledgment, “Surely as ever Saul was among the prophets, behold Milton among the wits!” — has lost little of its edge or point in the lapse of two cen-

turies. The picture portrays a certain class of religious persons of our day as vividly as if painted but yesterday. The clergy are no longer the keepers of men's consciences ; men no longer bow to authority as they did in Milton's time, and "resign the whole warehouse of their religion, with all its locks and keys," into a priest's custody, — but they too often now as then find the investigation of religious doctrines as well as the practice of piety to be "troublesome," and leave both to their pastor. Religion, now, as then, is too often made a distinct engagement from the ordinary pursuits of life. Dr. Arnold, of Rugby, used to complain that while he could get religious subjects treated in a masterly way, he could not get common subjects treated in a religious spirit. So with religion itself : we are ready to give it a day wholly to itself, but make it too often a stranger to the other six. As Emerson somewhere says, religion is not invited to eat, drink, or sleep with us, or to make or divide an estate, but is a holiday guest ; we confine it to churches and the closet, and do not think of taking it with us to the shop, the bank, or the social circle. Piety does not permeate, inform, and color all the acts of a man's life, but is cultivated *per se*, as a branch of the whole duty to man ; it is put on and off with the Sunday clothes. Business is not regarded as religion ; religion does not furnish the motive to business. Godliness is not so much a life as a specific part of it, — a sort of enclosure, railed off from the entire surface of existence, for the cultivation of virtues that will not flourish elsewhere. God's law is not allowed to enter the broker's or banker's shop, or the office of the lawyer or the politician ; it belongs to the church and Sunday. If the merchant spies it in his store, he throws it over the counter ; if the note-discounter



or the pawnbroker sees it in his place of business, he pitches it into the street.

The world has had enough of such piety. It demands at this close of the nineteenth century a religion that has something more to show as its credentials than orthodoxy of belief and attendance on church ordinances. It demands a religion that will not sell thirty-five inches of cloth or ribbon for a yard; that will not put the best wheat in the top of the sack, the best shingles on the outside of the bunch, and all the big, sound strawberries in the top of the basket; that will not put chicory into coffee, alum into bread, or water into milk-cans; that will not put Dent's or Jouvin's stamp on Jones's kid gloves, nor make Paris bonnets in the loft of a Boston or New York shop. The religion that commends itself to men's reason, and challenges their acceptance of it to-day, lays stress not only on "the exceeding sinfulness of sin," but on the wickedness of particular sins. It is a religion that will banish scant weights from the counter and short measures from the bin; that will not prey upon men after praying for them; that will discourage litigation; that will refuse two per cent a month on a loan to a poor man; that will pay the fare on an electric car when the conductor neglects to ask for it, and will call the cashier's attention to the mistakes of a waiter in a restaurant as well when he undercharges as when he overcharges; that will be deaf to backbiting and scandal; that will feel for the poor and the suffering in the pocket as well as in the heart, and give them loaves as well as tracts; that will have a conscience at Washington, in a committee-room, or in a caucus, as well as at home; that will be far less anxious to *seem* godly than to *be* so, and will seek not so much to do religious things as to do ordinary things in a religious spirit.



To promote such a religion, we need more preaching than we have to-day on what Robert Hall terms "particular parts of moral conduct and religious duties." "It is impossible," said he, "to give right views of them unless you dissect characters, and describe *particular virtues and vices*. To preach against sin in general, without descending to particulars, may lead many to complain of the evil of their hearts, while at the same time they are *awfully inattentive to the evil of their conduct*."<sup>1</sup>

**Common Absurdities.** To ask a trader if the article he sells you is of the first quality.

To tell a man of whom you would borrow money, that you desperately need it.

To ask a man to return borrowed money to you, and expect to retain his friendship.

To think you must win a lawsuit because you have the law and evidence on your side.

To say that you have "no leisure," instead of that you have no desire, for mental or moral improvement.

To tell everybody what a bright boy your "Johnny" or "Tommy" is, and repeat his "dreadfully smart" sayings.

To say after every notable event, "I knew" — or, "I strongly suspected — that it was going to take place."

To visit a friend when you are half dead with *ennui*, and expect him to enjoy, or to be thankful for, a visit which he owes solely to your being tired of yourself.

To think that the great difficulty in life is to find opportunity for your talents, and not talents for the opportunity.

To put salt in your soup before you have tasted it.

<sup>1</sup> Charge to the Rev. J. K. Hall.

To make a foolish match, and then ask a friend's opinion of it.

To think that a man who has wronged you will hate you no more than if you had wronged him.

To be a Smith or a Brown, and fancy that you have a distinct individuality.

To think that flogging boys makes them *smart* mentally as well as corporally.

To read a newspaper article on Goethe or The World's Fair, and be surprised if it ends with a puff of a patent medicine.

**Sticklers for Exactness.** READER, did you ever suffer from one of those pests of society, an argumentative bore, — one of those formal, mathematically precise people who take everything literally, and don't know what a trope or figure of speech means; who insist that a mile is only a mile, a peck measure only a peck, an hour just sixty minutes, no more and no less; who insist that you shall be exact to the minutest degree, to the most infinitesimal fractions, in your affirmations? If you ever knew such an one, did you not think that of all the nuisances you had encountered in society he was the most intolerable? Let one of these formalists enter a circle of good fellows, and he chills it like an iceberg. If one of the circle tells a good story, which is brimful of fun and "sets the tables in a roar," but which is not rigidly demonstrable in all its particulars, the scrupulist will proceed with owl-like gravity to correct him, and, stating his syllogism in *barbara* or *celarent*, will prove triumphantly that there is a "screw loose" in the logic, — that there is a "non-distribution of the middle term," — and that the merry gentleman is mistaken.

An inquisitor of this stamp will reply to the remark, "Ah! that is something like," with "Like *what?*" and insist upon an explanation. Tell him that on a certain day "it rained pitchforks," and he will regard it as an egregious falsehood, and demonstrate to you that it is physically impossible. Or, say "it rained cats and dogs," and he will gravely acknowledge that it may have rained toads, — *that* is well known to scientists, — but cats and dogs, never!

In an editorial article some years ago, we compared something to "a bird's egg in size," and two of these sticklers rushed incontinently into our office and remonstrated against the extreme looseness of our statement; birds' eggs, they protested, were of all sizes, from a robin's up to those of an ostrich or condor.

A friend of ours chancing to say that it was but "a smart walk" to a certain place, he was rigidly catechised by one of these dampers about the length of a *smart* walk. "Steeptock or Barlow," said the higgler for truth, "would do a dozen miles in an hour; whereas Daniel Lambert, with his unwieldy mass of flesh, would have regarded a single mile as exhausting."

Another gentleman happened to use the phrase, "a stone's throw off," and was at once brought up with, "It's but a stone's throw, you say; but, my dear sir, what do you *call* a stone's throw? Mount Vesuvius will throw you a stone a matter of thirty miles; and little David, though not so strong as Vesuvius, would throw a stone much farther than I could, — witness his attack upon Goliath!" "Oh, I mean it is but a street's length off," answered the victim. "Well, but, my dear sir, streets differ in length," rejoined the indefatigable querist; and he proceeded to illustrate

the correctness of his assumptions by citing divers examples of long and short thoroughfares.

Whip us such incorrigible matter-of-fact men!

**Colored Malaprops.** OF all the persons, from Mrs. Malaprop downward, who dislocate and disguise the Queen's English, the colored men take the lead. Some years ago a white-washer of this race called upon us and asked for a job. When questioned about his skill, he replied: "Squire, I will do it in the *most obnoxious* manner. You'll find it *perfectly obnoxious*."

The late James T. Fields once told us that an aged "darkey," whom he often passed when taking his "constitutional," used to say to him: "'Pears to me, Mr. Fields, you are a mighty *predestinarian*."

The late Dr. Jeremiah Chaplin, of Boston, used to tell of a colored Baptist preacher, who was ludicrously unfortunate in his use of words. One Sunday morning, after the doctor had preached to his people, the pastor prayed with great fervor that the Lord would "bless to their good the gospel that had been *dispensed with* that day!"

**The Poet of Home.** WHAT a strange, mocking destiny was that which made a man who never had a home stand for all time as home's representative poet! By turns actor, clerk, and journalist, John Howard Payne became at last a writer of plays, and entered upon a career which he henceforth persistently pursued despite the humors of a fortune that more frequently frowned than smiled. During his voluntary exile of twenty-one years he spent much time in Paris, engaged in the profitless task of adapting French dramas to the English stage. This period was perhaps the gloomiest and most trying in his vagabond



career. Often the future laureate of home happiness had not a place in which to lay his head with absolute assurance against ignominious expulsion. There were even times when he could not muster money enough to pay the postage of an English letter, — times, too, when his landlady impounded all his worldly goods, and cheap scraps from the restaurants formed his frugal dinner.

The savage irony of Payne's fate has few parallels. The nearest that we can hastily recall are Cowper writing "John Gilpin" in a state of mental gloom bordering on madness, and Heron composing his book on "The Comforts of Human Life" in prison.

**Evils of Having One's Life Saved.** MORALISTS of all ages, from Solomon downward, have laid much stress on the danger of being "under obligation," and their warnings seem well founded. It is pleasant to have kindnesses done to us, but not if we are to be unceasingly reminded of them, and of the debt of gratitude we owe.

Many years ago, a friend of ours was saved from drowning by a person with whom he was slightly acquainted. Of course, he thanked his deliverer most warmly. Ever afterwards the philanthropic gentleman stuck to him like a burr. He clung to him like the Old Man of the Sea to Sinbad the sailor; he followed him to his house, dined and wined with him, borrowed money which he forgot to repay, — in short, dogged and haunted him at every step, constantly asking favors on the plea that he had saved his life. Our friend bore this with philosophic equanimity for a long while, only now and then bemoaning his ill luck in having been pulled out of the water. At last, being asked one day, for the hundredth time or more, "Well, Jones,



you'll stand treat to-day, I suppose, — saved your life, you know?" our friend lost patience, and turning upon his persecutor, he burst forth, in a voice which made the fellow's hair stand up like quills on the fretful porcupine: "Yes, sir, I *will* treat *this* time, and the *last*, though I've paid that debt thrice over, long ago. But, sir, mark me! if ever you catch me drowning again, for Heaven's sake *let me sink*, — let me go, hook and line, bob and sinker; for it would have been a thousand dollars in my pocket if you had let me drown before!"

**Be Good without a Theory.** WOULD not some men be more virtuous and more happy if they would act a little more self-unconsciously, — allow themselves to be moved more by feeling, and less by a knowledge of the causes of action? Many persons treat their virtues or their piety as Goethe says that Mendelssohn treated beauty, — they try to catch it as a butterfly, and pin it down for inspection. They succeed in the same way as they are likely to succeed with the butterfly: the poor animal trembles and struggles, and its brightest colors are gone; or if you catch it without spoiling the colors, you have at best a stiff and awkward corpse. When a child plucks up daily the bean he has planted, to see how it grows, he destroys the life he would cherish; and when men pluck up the roots of holiness or happiness to see just how they sprout, and watch the growth of the minutest bud or the unfolding of the tiniest leaf, they destroy the plants they are trying to rear. Bees will not work under prying eyes; the bird is scared from its nest when even kindly hands disturb its eggs; trees die if their roots are laid bare; and the germs of goodness and happiness, if torn up and planted on the firm ground of scientific conviction, wither and die.

**Old Age.**

THERE are few men, even Christians, who do not dread old age. Why is this? As the nightingale sings most sweetly in the evening; as the woods put on their gayest and most charming aspect in the fall of the year; as the sun is most beautiful when about to sink beneath the horizon, — why should not old age, the sunset of life, be more cheerful and joyous than its meridian?

We believe it may be so, provided one has that “hope which is an anchor to the soul,” and provided he is not, as the French say, *désillusionné*, — a sad word, by which they designate one who has worn out all his youthful ideals; who has “been behind the scenes,” and has seen the bare walls of the theatre, without the light and the paint, and has watched the ugly actors and the gaunt actresses by daylight. When Fontenelle at ninety was asked what inconvenience he experienced, he replied, “None but that of existence,” — an admission that most of the ills of old age are imaginary, and that in regard to this as to many other bugbear troubles, “the fear of ill exceeds the ill we fear.”

**A Bad Bargain.**

STATES, as well as individuals, sometimes make bad bargains, which appear to be wise strokes of policy. One of the worst trades ever made was made by France, when, after the Peace of Paris, she bought the half-savage island of Corsica, despite the intrigues of the North. Only a twelvemonth after the sale was consummated, Napoleon Bonaparte was born there, a French subject, — the founder of a military despotism, which by incessant conscriptions drained France of its life-blood, perverted education to serve the cause of tyranny, converted religion into an engine of oppression, corrupted the nation's morality by successful spoliation, subjected a

proud military people to the humiliation of an armed enemy in its capital, and turned Europe backward to those ages of darkness and calamity when the only law was the sword.

**The Classics in Education.** WE believe in the classics — the master-pieces of Greek and Latin literature — as a means of culture, notwithstanding we have read a great many arguments therefor. One of these arguments is, that Greek and Latin literature was the ark in which all the world's civilization was preserved during the deluge of barbarism. True; but Noah did not think himself bound to live in the ark after the deluge had subsided, did he? When a college professor, seeking to convince Horace Greeley of the value of the classic languages as a means of culture, said: "These languages are the conduits of the literary treasures of antiquity," — the white-coated philosopher replied: "I like Croton water very well; but it doesn't follow that I should eat a yard or two of lead-pipe."

**Boys.** WHAT a dull, humdrum world this would be but for the wit and mischief, the drollery and mirth-provoking follies, that come with the unfailing supply of youngsters! What sayings are more original, quaint, and unique, more truly "steeped in the very brine of conceit," than those that sometimes drop from the lips of boys? How often a little spindle-shanked fellow, who has not yet vaulted into a jacket and trousers, will stagger you with a problem beyond the power of an Aristotle or a Herbert Spencer to solve! How demure and innocent, too, the sly little rogues will look all the while, — just as if they had n't

the wit to quiz you, and had never dreamed that their questions were not perfectly and easily explicable! John G. Saxe, who well understood the boy's nature, says, —

“If to ask questions that would puzzle Plato,  
And all the schoolmen of the middle age,  
If to make precepts worthy of old Cato,  
Be deemed philosophy, — your boy's a sage.”

No wonder that Charles Lamb, when looking at the sports in the playing-fields of Eton College, thought it a pity that so many of these fine young fellows would one day become mere frivolous members of Parliament. In a similar spirit the poet Præd wishes that he —

“could run away  
From House and Court and Levee,  
Where bearded men appear to-day  
Just *Eton boys grown heavy.*”

What could be happier than the reply of a schoolboy in one of the advanced classes to the question, “What is the highest form of animal life?” — “The giraffe,” was the prompt response. Hardly less felicitous was the reply of another little boy, a scion of the house of Beecher, who had been rebuked for some noisy proceeding, in which his little sister had also taken part. Claiming that she also should be included in the indictment, he said: “If a boy makes too much noise, you tell him he must n't be boisterous. Well, then, when a girl makes just as much noise, you ought to tell her not to be *girlsterous.*”

The solutions of problems in natural philosophy given by boy-scholars are sometimes very amusing. An urchin in a public school in Maine, being asked why the rainbow is circular in form, answered that “it was fixed so that



people and teams might go under it." In a Virginia school, of which I was the teacher many years ago, a boy wrote a "composition" on the ocean, in the course of which he declared that "the ocean is a great blessing to mankind; for, without it, Columbus would never have discovered America." It was a Boston boy, of an arithmetical turn of mind, who, when asked if he had ever had the measles, replied, "Yes;" and to the question, "How many?" answered "Six." He must have been a son of the man who, being asked what were his politics, said that he had none. "None at all?" "No, not a politic."

Some years ago a class of boys was under examination in the sea-beaten town of Sussex, England. The subject of which their knowledge was to be tested was the Flood. Among the questions was, "How did Noah know that there would be a flood?" "'Cause," shouted a confident urchin, "he looked at his almanac." This boy was probably first cousin to another, who, when asked by a missionary, "If your father and mother should forsake you, who would take you up?" answered promptly, "The police." More *naïve* than even these replies was that of the English youngster to the question, "Who is the prime minister of Great Britain?" — "Mr. Spurgeon."

"We all send love, and so do I," wrote an eleven-year-old to me recently from his home in "little Rhody." Visiting a Benedict friend in Maine, I overheard one day a newly-breeched urchin complaining bitterly of his mother because she had refused to grant his request for some bread and molasses. "I'll tell you how to work her," said a younger brother in low tones, as if fearful of being overheard. "*Bump your head against the wall, and cry, Dan, as I do, and you can get anything you want.*" It was in



Cincinnati that little Johnny ran into the house one day, while the mercury was in the nineties, and, with the perspiration streaming from every pore, shouted: "Mamma, mamma! fix me! I'm leaking all over!" Of course it was in Massachusetts that a boy, after attending a Sunday-school, plucked several hairs from his cranium, and began examining them with a magnifying-glass. "Why," he despairingly cried, after many fruitless experiments, "I can't find any *figures* on my hair!" "Why did you expect to find any?" asked his mother. With charming innocence and perfect good faith, he replied: "Does n't the Bible say, 'The hairs of your head are all *numbered*'?"

The following incident fell under my observation many years ago in Waterville, Maine. Everybody knows how customary it is for boys to "crow like chanticleer" over each other at every opportunity; and among other things, if they are rivals at school or elsewhere, to outbrag each other regarding the comparative extent of their respective fathers' possessions, — as, for example: "My pa has got a great big house, and yours h-a-i-n-t!" "My pa's got a new wood-shed," — and so on, from houses and lands to hen-coops and martin-boxes. Two young rogues had been engaged one day in a boasting contest of this sort, when one of them, having exhausted in his enumeration all his father's possessions, — real property, personal, and mixed, — was "stumped" at last, brought to a dead stand. Meanwhile his antagonist was chuckling, in the anticipation of triumph, with all the ecstasy of a ten-pin player who has won a succession of ten-strikes. He had brought up his *corps de réserve*, his imperial guard, in the shape of a corn-barn and an old spavined horse, and was charging home upon his unfortunate rival with all the fury of a Cos-

sack transfixing a Pole. Conscious of impending defeat, our hero stood silent under the biting taunts, his countenance the picture of blank despair. Vainly did he try to recall one, just one, additional piece of property, however small, that his papa owned; but it was like "calling spirits from the vasty deep," — it would not come. Suddenly a bright thought struck him. "Well," he exclaimed, as his features lighted up, and his eyes sparkled with triumph, "I don't care, Jim; there's one thing you hain't got, — *you hain't got any dead grandmother!*"

It was not a boy, but a little girl, who wrote an essay on the cow, and closed by saying that "the cow is the most useful animal in the world, except religion;" a remark which recalls a sentence in a letter of introduction, given in 1861 to a friend of mine, by Artemus Ward: "He is a member of the press, and several other religious denominations."

A down-east schoolboy once gave an interpretation of a passage of Scripture, at which Clark and Henry would have stood aghast. Being asked by the pedagogue the meaning of the phrase "making the waste places glad," which a school-mate, who was noted among his playmates for his frolics with the girls, had just read aloud, he paused, and scratched his head with a puzzled look; then suddenly, with a look of triumph, he cried out: "It means hugging the girls; for Tom Jones is always hugging 'em round the waist, and it makes 'em as glad as can be."

Reader, did you ever visit a New England town-school, in the days of "auld lang syne"? If so, you must have heard some such cries as these: "Master! Jim keeps pokin' straws in my ear!" "'Gus Stevins keeps scrougin' so, I can't study my lesson!" "May I leave my seat?"

“Sam Soule has spilt his ink all over my writing-book!”  
“Master, may I gwaout to get s’mice [some ice] to put in my trousers to keep my nose from bleedin’?” “Master, Tom Ross is whispering to the girls; I seed him as plain as could be.” “Don’t joggle me agin, gaul darn ye!”  
“Gimme my ruler!” “Quit pinchin’; you’ll git it, Bill Healey, when school’s dismissed!” “Who cares for you, Hen Barney?” etc.

But amusing as this scene may be, it is more diverting to see a troop of boys let loose from an old-fashioned country school. No sooner does the weary, care-worn pedagogue, pulling out his watch, utter the joyous words, “School’s dismissed!” than *exeunt* boys, like a stampede of wild-cats, through the narrow porch, wedging it so full that for some moments they can hardly move, and, finally, as the jam gives way, sprawling *en masse* at full length over the threshold. But, huzza! they have scrambled up again; and here they come, with their “smiling, shining faces,” running, leaping, jumping, tumbling along, hallooing at the top of their lungs, their little hearts almost bursting with joy over their release from their literary dungeon and the terrors of the master’s rod. “Whoop!” there they go “like mad,” with limbs all life and elasticity, and hearts all harmony and gladness, drunk with their dream of liberty, and dashing off, like Congreve rockets, into a thousand paths of pleasure and fun, — some to roam through the woods and fields; some to sail their pine-shingle boats on the lake or silver brook; some to gather nuts from the beech or the oil-nut tree, or to angle for perch or the sly trout; but each fancying that he will have time to go half round the world and be back before night. Happy, happy schoolboys! The very curs of the neighborhood sympa-

thize with your joy over your release from thralldom, and could they speak, would each say with Burns's Cæsar, —

“ My heart has been so fain to see them,  
That I for joy hae barkit wi' 'em.”

**The Hardening Process.** THE poet Whittier is reported as saying that “ Snow-Bound ” recalls to him his sufferings from the cold in the home of his boyhood, where the snow beat in through the crevices in the roof of his bedroom ; and he attributes his lack of robust health to these early exposures. And yet there are hundreds of persons who never tire of singing the praises of “ the hardening process ” of bodily training, or exposure to cold, wet, etc., and of lauding the supposed consequent toughness of our forefathers, who really were shorter-lived than their descendants. “ Do not hardships harden the constitution ? ” it is triumphantly asked. The simple truth is, that early hardships, by destroying all the weak, merely prove the hardness of the survivors. That hardness is the cause, not the effect, of their having lived through such a training. By loading a gun to the muzzle, and firing it off, you do not give it strength ; you only prove, if it escape bursting, that it was strong.

**Mental Activity and Longevity.** DRYDEN, in his masterly portraiture of Shaftesbury, the restless and scheming counsellor of Cromwell and chancellor of Charles II., characterizes him as —

“ A fiery soul, which, working out its way,  
Fretted the pigmy body to decay,  
And o'er-informed the tenement of clay.”

Immortal lines, which have become household words, but which, as descriptive of that wonderful politician, are



but half true. A "fiery soul" his, indeed, was; but it is doubtful if the body's decay was not due to inherited disease rather than to his intense mental activity. The truth is that the author of the Habeas Corpus Act was born a cripple; he could not move without his man and his crutch, and he suffered daily from epileptic fits. "I was never," he once said, "without a dull aching pain of that side." Instead of shortening his life, it is probable that his extraordinary mental activity prolonged it by dispelling the morbid brooding over his physical infirmities and pains, in which he might have indulged had he kept out of the whirl of politics, and lived like "the dull weed that rots itself in ease on Lethe's wharf."

So, doubtless, with scores of other men who have been supposed to have killed themselves by overwork. They have borne that within them which would have more ignobly killed them if they had not thrown themselves impetuously into the intellectual struggle, and thus withdrawn their thoughts from "the Bluebeard chambers of the heart." The slenderness of Chamfort's frame, the delicacy of his features, and the mingled sadness, sweetness, and resignation of his looks when he was calm, led his friends to suppose that he was doomed to wear out early. But in spite of these physiognomic appearances, his friend Mirabeau declared that it was so far from being true that the blade was wearing out the scabbard, that it was the very *vis ignea* which preserved the machine. "Give him another soul," said Mirabeau, "and his frail existence would straightway dissolve."

**Autobiography** THE world moves in a circle. **Autobiog-**  
**Revived.** raphy, so common in some bygone ages, is



in vogue again. One of the latest is that of Mr. Ball, the American sculptor, at Rome. The interest of such self-portraiture, when well done, is unquestionable; but what is its value? Augustine's is, no doubt, trustworthy; but how many other men have the courage to pluck out the heart of their mystery, to turn themselves inside out, and lay bare all their innate selfishness and deceitfulness, as he did?

Only too truly did Voltaire say that there is no man who has not something hateful in him, some of the wild beast in him; but there are few who will quite honestly tell us how they manage their wild beast. Rousseau professed to unbosom himself in his "Confessions;" but he kept back as much as, if not more than, he revealed. The deception of which he accuses Montaigne is one which he himself, to a considerable extent, practised, and to which all autobiography is liable. "I put Montaigne," he says, "at the head of those *falsely-sincere* persons who wish to deceive in telling the truth. He shows himself with his faults, but he gives himself none but amiable ones; *there is no man who has not odious ones*. Montaigne paints his likeness, but it is a profile. Who knows whether some scar on the cheek, or an eye put out, on the side which he conceals from us, would not have totally changed the physiognomy?"

**Ancient Music** WHEN we tire of the praises of Greek art and **Modern**. and the proclamations of the inferiority of modern which are ceaselessly dinned in our ears, and of which we are sometimes as weary as were the Athenians of hearing of "Aristides the Just," it is consoling to reflect that in one art the ancient Greeks fell immeasurably

below the men of our day. Surpassing as was their excellence in painting, sculpture, and architecture, they were far below the moderns in music. Though Cicero deemed it a mark of their unrivalled acuteness that they considered no man accomplished unless he was a musician, it is doubtful if they knew anything about this art in the modern sense of the term. Of simple melodies, executed on a pipe, or on a lyre with three strings, they had an abundance; but could they have had any conception, or even dreamed, of the grand orchestral and choral harmonies, the prodigal coloring, and heaven-scaling wails of passionate aspiration in the music of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries? Had they a Handel, a Beethoven, a Mozart, a Wagner, or even a Gounod or a Spohr?

It has been pretended at times that the music of to-day is based and perfected upon that of the Greeks; but the simple truth is that in Greece and the isles of Greece, "where burning Sappho loved and sung," time and harmony — all that we now call music — were unknown. Were old Timotheus, who, according to Dryden, by his breathing flute and sounding lyre —

"Could swell the soul to rage, or kindle soft desire" —

to rise from the dead, and listen to the complex harmonies and unearthly strains of Handel's "Messiah," to the bursts of choral gladness in Haydn's "Creation," or to the "Hailstone Chorus" in Beethoven's "Pastoral Symphony," — that "grandest and most fearful of all storms which ever thundered in the basses, whistled in the flutes, bellowed and blustered in the trumpets, and lightened and hailed in the violins," — no other change or development in modern civilization, not even its steam-engine, electric

telegraph or telephone, would astonish him more than the revolution in his own art.

**Some Uses of Greek.** APROPOS of the old Greeks, I am reminded of an original and unique reason for acquiring a mastery of that language given some forty years ago by "Vivian," the brilliant literary, musical, and theatrical critic of the London "Leader" (George H. Lewes, author of the "Biographical History of Philosophy," and various other works). Referring to a dwarf poet living in Cos or in Athens, who was so small and light that his friends fastened lead to his sandals to prevent the wind from toppling him over, the critic says: "There you see the virtue of lead. I take the hint. Conscious of my own specific levity, I leaden my remarks with imposing Greek or formidable philosophy; for you will have noticed in the British mind an incurable suspicion of all vivacious talkers and writers. As it is not in my nature to be grave, I borrow my gravity from the Greeks. Greek covereth a vast array of ignorance; Greek endoweth stupidity with an air of very supreme wisdom. That which in English would be commonplace, an adroit writer puts in Greek; and then —

"How the wit brightens! how the style refines!"

"It has been my lot (I may say misfortune) to have read a considerable amount of Greek in my time, and, honestly, the best use I have found for it has been for lead for my sandals. I harass Jones with Greek; he would despise me if it were not for that; but as he does not know what depths of wisdom may not lie concealed in the mind of a man who calls himself a *poludakrutos aner* (a really

fine phrase, by the way, — ‘the many-sorrowed man!’), and who tells him that *emathen eph’oon epathe* (‘he has learned through the things he has suffered’), Jones keeps contempt in abeyance, though, to be sure, he replaces it with dislike. I harass him, and he hates me. I crush his arguments by a quotation which he does n’t understand, and so he is silent, because he is ashamed to ask the meaning!”

**The First Step.** *Il n’y a que le premier pas qui coûte*, — “The first step is the only difficulty,” — says a French proverb. In attempting any great enterprise it is all-important to begin vigorously at the onset. Did you ever, in the days of brass door-knockers, give a feeble rap at first, without finding it impossible to knock loudly afterward? Did not brass in your hands seem to have lost all its brazen properties? So in moral enterprises, the first blow often determines all the rest. In moving a heavy load, in undertaking a dry and forbidding study, in forming a habit of abstinence or economy, the beginning is the hardest task. In the religious life, as every pastor knows, crossing the Rubicon is the main difficulty. In writing a book, a review, or a newspaper article, even after forty or fifty years of practice, it is in the composition of the first paragraph that “the rub” lies; the very idea of it often hangs like a millstone about the neck for a week. A writer often plunges into the middle of his subject at once, to get rid of the trouble of a proper beginning, and perhaps never gets any farther. Clergymen who put off the writing of their sermons till Saturday night or Sunday morning, do so from an acute sense of the misery of beginning. Even Milton, with all his genius, seems to have shrunk



from this misery; for he says of the subject of his "heroic song," "It pleased me, long choosing, and beginning late."

It is an interesting fact that the old Romans were so impressed with the conviction that beginnings are all-important, that their chief word for beginning was *principium*, — as if they meant to declare that the beginning is the *principle*, the very foundation, core, and seed of things. *Dimidium facti, qui cœpit, habet*, says Horace in his Epistle to Lollius, — "He who begins is half done;" or as Conington renders it, —

"You are halfway over, when you once plunge in."

An amusing illustration of the French proverb is the answer given in an English play by a person who is urged to fight a duel, but is unable "to screw his courage to the sticking-place." When his "friends" try to prick him on with the cool assurance that "it is a very slight thing, sir; you'll only have to stand up and be shot at two or three times," he replies: "Gentlemen, I wish you distinctly to understand that I have no objection whatever to being shot at the *second* and *third* time; my only objection is to the *first* time." In a similar vein, but more exquisitely ludicrous, was the application of the proverb by a Protestant lady, to whom a Roman priest declared in a social circle that Saint Piat, after his head was cut off, walked two entire leagues with it in his hand. "Yes, madam," he reaffirmed, with redoubled force of lungs, "two entire leagues!" "I firmly believe it," rejoined she; "in such a feat *the first step is the only difficulty*."

**Proofs of**      **WHAT** is the highest proof of courage?  
**Courage.**    Charles the Fifth, who was so cool in battle



though he trembled while arming for the fight, had some peculiar notions on this subject. When he once saw inscribed on a tombstone, "Here lies a man who never knew fear," he said: "Then he can never have snuffed a candle with his fingers!"

Montaigne said that the thing he was most afraid of was fear. A schoolboy thinks that the highest proof of courage is going fearlessly through the ordeal of an examination; a college student thinks (or used to think in our undergraduate days) that it is boldly confronting the blackboard *impransus* at daybreak on a bleak winter's morning, especially if half the night previous was passed in dissolving sugar in cognac instead of in solving mathematical problems, or in consuming a known quantity of oysters and other edibles instead of letting  $x$  represent the unknown quantity in an algebraic riddle. An Englishman, who had been half petrified in some continental cold-water establishment, considered that it was the crucial test of courage to go naked under a mountain torrent, converted into a "douche," on a winter's morning. All these acts are severe tests of pluck; but a feat infinitely transcending them in valor, — a feat requiring a steadiness of nerve and an icy coolness of determination almost superhuman, — is that which Thomas Hood, who himself had the hardihood to perform it, characterizes in the following lines: —

"Wedlock's a very awful thing!  
'T is something like that feat in the ring  
Which requires great nerve to do it,  
When one of a Grand Equestrian Troupe  
Makes a jump at a gilded hoop, —  
Not certain at all  
Of what may befall,  
After his getting through it."

**Thackeray.** A NEW biography of Thackeray has called forth fresh tributes to his genius. What a charming, yet what an instructive, writer he was! What a service he did in his day to society by the inimitable way in which he exposed the minor vices of his time! He never attempted to reform men by exhorting them to be good; he simply told them that by not being good they were in danger of making themselves ridiculous, contemptible, and unhappy. Great as were his gifts as a humorist and a satirist, he had others almost as great. Inside his fine, sagacious, common-sense understanding there was, it has been happily said, a pool of poetry, — like the *impluvium* in the hall of a Roman house, which gave an air of coolness and freshness and nature to the solid marble columns and tessellated floor.

Fully to enjoy Thackeray's writings requires a delicate taste, — the palate of a *dégustateur*, not the gross appetite of a novel-reader, ravenous for startling incident and plot. His stories are to be sipped like the finest and rarest wine; and “it is neither to his praise nor his blame, but simply to his liking, to invite none but the epicures of life's various feast of joys and sorrows to his select table. Only those who have shed their illusions, and passed through a premature cynicism into a larger and more complete philosophy of life, — less bitter and more compassionate, less trustful and more sympathetic, saddened rather than sad, and smiling genially through unshed tears at human weakness and human vanity, — only these can feel the subtle charm of a humorist like Thackeray.”

**Literary Shipwrecks.** WHEN Gilfillan's “Gallery of Literary Portraits” appeared in 1845, an eminent lay-

divine to whom a copy of it was sent is said to have written to the author, "You have sent me a list of *shipwrecks*."

"It was but too true," says a reviewer, "for that gallery contains the name of a Godwin, shipwrecked on a false system; and of a Shelley, shipwrecked on an extravagant version of that false system; and a Hazlitt, shipwrecked on no system at all; and a Hall, driven upon the rugged sea of madness; and a Foster, cast high and dry upon the dark shore of misanthropy; and an Edward Irving, inflated into sublime idiocy by the breath of popular favor, and in the subsidence of that breath left to roll at the mercy of the waves, a mere log; and lastly a Coleridge and a De Quincey, stranded together on the same poppy-covered coast, the land of the 'Lotus-Eaters,' where it is never morning nor midnight, nor full day, but always afternoon."

What a change has taken place in the careers of literary men since these melancholy words were written! Though the number of eminent writers has greatly multiplied during the last half-century, yet, thanks to the warnings which their predecessors' lives have given, and to many other causes, it would be difficult to point to an equal number of shipwrecks, and equally disastrous, among the great *littérateurs*, — the "ships of thought, deep-freighted with truth and beauty," — of the present time.

**The Sycophancy of Literature.** DE QUINCEY, in his essays on the poets, observes that many a writer is by the sycophancy of literature reputed to be read, whom in all Europe not six eyes settle upon in the revolving year. Literature with its cowardly falsehoods exhibits, he thinks,

the largest field of conscious Phrygian adulation that human life has ever exposed to the derision of the heavens. "Demosthenes, for instance, or Plato, is not read to the extent of twenty pages annually by ten persons in Europe. The sale of their works would not account for three readers; the other six or seven are generally conceded possibilities furnished by the great public libraries."

Reader, what do you think of this arraignment? Does it startle you by its sweeping cynical assertions? Are you confident that it does a gross injustice both to the *chefs d'œuvre* of literature and to educated men? If so, and you deem yourself a cultivated man, let me ask how much of *your* time is spent with the masters, —

"The dead, but sceptred sovereigns, who still rule  
Our spirits from their urns?"

Are you incessantly, are you even occasionally, occupied with Homer, Æschylus, Lucretius, Dante, Goethe, Molière, Spenser, Bacon, Milton, and Wordsworth, not to speak of other intellectual giants who are mastered with more difficulty? It would be better for you thoughtfully to read, study, and inwardly digest the works of these Titans than to devour, as perhaps you do, Haggard's last romance, "The Bandit of the Abruzzi," or "Phineas Finn." When you were young, you perhaps studied some of the "old masters" of literature with intense eagerness; but once having read them, did you not place them in your bookcase, content ever afterward with reverence and an occasional sigh of regret that you had not time to read them — and to read them more thoughtfully — again?

Is there not biting truth in Voltaire's sarcasm on Dante, that his reputation will now be continually growing greater and greater because there is now nobody who reads



him? Are there not hundreds of men who, while professing an egregious admiration of Milton's poems, yet secretly feel as Johnson did, that "the perusal of 'Paradise Lost' is a duty rather than a pleasure;" or as did the accomplished Lord Chesterfield, when he wrote to a friend: "What will you say, when I tell you truly that I cannot possibly read our countryman Milton through? Keep this secret for me; for if it should be known, I should be abused by every tasteless pedant and every solid divine in Europe." Alexander Smith, himself a poet, frankly avows that reading Milton is like dining off gold plate in a company of kings, — very splendid, very ceremonious, and not a little appalling. "Him I never lay down without the same kind of comfort that one returning from the presence feels when he doffs his respectful attitude and dress of ceremony, and subsides into old coat, familiar armchair, and slippers." We like the candor and courage of this avowal. How much nobler is it — how much nobler, too, is Gray's avowal that he could see no talent in Rousseau's "*Nouvelle Héloïse*," nor merit in Thomson's "*Castle of Indolence*" — than the hollow praise of classic authors over whom they yawn, by readers that have not even the independence of Boileau's literary coxcomb, who says, —

"La Pucelle est encore une œuvre bien galante,  
Et je ne sais pourquoi je baille en la lisant."

We should like to see a trustworthy statistical paper setting forth the number of persons who buy Bacon, Burke, Milton, or Montesquieu, etc., compared with the number of those who actually read these great writers. When we enter Jones's library, and see the shelves packed with



weighty authors, with all those works “which no gentleman’s library *should* be without;” when we gaze on the gravity and learning, the wisdom and wit, silently beckoning to Jones, — we are tempted to envy him the possession of such literary wealth, such

“Infinite riches in a little room,”

and wish that we were the lucky dog who can sing, —

“My days among the dead are passed;  
 Around me I behold,  
 Where’er these casual eyes are cast,  
 The mighty minds of old.  
 My never-failing friends are they,  
 With whom I converse night and day.”

Wicked though it be, we can hardly help violating the commandment about coveting our neighbor’s goods, until our eyes glance at the centre-table and there detect the literature with which Jones is actually occupied; namely, the newest sensational novel, the last Harper’s or Century Magazine, Cavendish on Whist, and Staunton on chess. But let us not laugh at Jones, as if his sycophancy was exceptional. He is only one of thousands — indeed, of the great majority of men — who bend the knee and doff the cap at certain authors that are standard, with a reverence that savors of fetich worship. The same practice prevailed in Rome two thousand years ago. Martial, the epigrammatist, boasts that while the “imposing works,” the classics of his day, were praised, admired, and adored, his own witty poems were read, —

“*Illa tamen laudant omnes, mirantur, adorant,  
 Confiteor; laudant illa, sed ista legunt.*”

When will this mock worship, the offspring of abject cowardice, cease? When will men cease lying in tradi-

tional formulas, — pretending to admire and to enjoy, because others praise them, books which put them to sleep, — and give voice to their honest convictions? When Johnson, Wordsworth, and Coleridge declare that they can see no merit in Gray's "Elegy;" when Jeffrey scoffs at Wordsworth, and Keats characterizes the poets of Queen Anne's time as "a school of dolts," — why should not humbler folk have the courage of their opinions? They cannot err more egregiously than these critics; and, surely, it is better to be honest, even though it provoke a laugh at our expense, than to lie.

**The Value of Praise.** DOES it ever occur to a young public lecturer that the praises lavished on his performance, as he comes down from the platform, are to be taken, in most cases, not *cum grano*, but with a deduction of fifty to ninety per cent? Of course, an "old stager" knows how hollow many of such compliments are, and seldom lays the flattering unction to his soul that, because he has been congratulated on his "brilliant" or "eloquent" address, he has therefore made a hit. An incident in my own limited experience as a lecturer opened my eyes widely on this point. Some thirty-five years ago I gave a lecture over an hour long in a course at Hyde Park, Ill. When I had concluded the address, Dr. G., the president of the lecture committee, said to me: "You have given us an admirable lecture. I noticed that you skipped, from time to time, certain pages of your address. Why did n't you give us the whole of it? We could have heard you with pleasure for twenty minutes longer." Elated with this praise, which made me regret that I had omitted many of my good things, I called the next morning on an editorial friend in Chicago,

who was a nephew of Dr. G., who had tickled my ears with his praise. "Good-morning," said my friend; "I hear that you scored a decided success at Hyde Park last night. Dr. G., the president of the association, says that you gave them an excellent lecture; its only fault was, that it was just twenty minutes too long!"

**Two Men in One.** THE Abbé Galiani, the little great man of Italy in the eighteenth century, — who had, in the opinion of Sainte-Beuve, great, lofty, sublime thoughts, worthy of Vico, if not of Plato, which suddenly were put to flight by buffooneries, jests, and fooleries, — once said of himself: "You see that I am two different men kneaded together, who, nevertheless, do not entirely occupy the room of one." Galiani was not alone in this duplicity. Milton was a poet and a theologian rolled into one. In Leonardo da Vinci a dozen or more men were kneaded together, — a painter, sculptor, mathematician, metaphysician, musician, poet, engineer, architect, chemist, botanist, anatomist, astronomer, naturalist, and mechanic, — all in one skin. In Gladstone we have a mediæval schoolman, a classical scholar, and a statesman kneaded together. In that maximus-minimus of men, the versatile Jeffrey, Macaulay, in his youth, found a diversity of beings which alike surprised and fascinated him. "He has twenty faces," Macaulay wrote, "almost as unlike each other as my father's to Wilberforce's. . . . When quiescent, his countenance shows no indication whatever of intellectual superiority. But as soon as he is interested, and opens his eyes upon you, the change is like magic. There is a flash in his glance, a violent contortion in his frown, an exquisite humor in his sneer, and a sweetness

and brilliancy in his smile, beyond anything I ever witnessed. . . . Sometimes Scotch predominates in his pronunciation; sometimes it is imperceptible. Sometimes his utterance is snappish and quick to the last degree; sometimes it is remarkable for rotundity and mellowness. I can easily conceive that two persons who had seen him on different days might dispute about him as the travellers in the fable disputed about the chameleon."

**Long Inter-** It was said of Sir William Grant, the  
**missions.** learned Master of the Rolls in England, that, though a forcible and easy speaker, he was a remarkably silent man, and, as judge, was distinguished for his verbal economy and his inexhaustible patience. He once heard an elaborate argument, it is said, for two days, and when the counsel had concluded, summed up in five words: "Gentlemen, the act is repealed." When one day he rode out from Banff, his Scottish residence, with some friends a few miles into the country, the only observation that escaped his lips was suggested by a field of peas: "Very fine peas." The next day, riding out with the same companions, he was equally silent till he passed the same field, when he muttered: "And very finely podded, too." Was General Grant, who was of Scotch descent and equally silent, a relative of Sir William?

The long pause between the latter's two remarks reminds us of an incident that occurred some fifty-four years ago at the house of a gentleman in this city, who manifested a similar Abernethian brevity of speech. Having begun to tell a circle of friends, of whom we were one, that, among President Tyler's nominations to office in Boston, "Robert Rantoul had been named for the collec-



tor—" he was interrupted at this point by a knock at the door. Rising from his chair, he walked slowly to the door, opened it, passed into the hall, closed the door, and after some directions to a servant, came back to his chair, deliberately adjusted himself in it, and then added "ship" (collectorship). It is said that some of the old English actors, who were wont to make pauses before the delivery of emphatic words or telling points, sometimes carried the practice to a ludicrous extreme. When Mossop was once personating the character of Zanga in the play of "The Revenge," it is said that in his speech to Alonzo, —

" Know, then, 't was I that — "

he made so long a pause after these words, that a listener might have left the theatre at the first one of them, called a coach, and returned to the box in time to hear that Zanga — "did it!"

**The Price of Excellence.** IN how many ways do men who aspire to excellence in any art or accomplishment seek to escape from the inexorable law that labor — unwearyed, never-ending labor — is its price! Endless are the tricks and contrivances to outwit nature, — the short cuts and easy methods of mastering languages, sciences, and professional knowledges, of all which one may say, as Joseph de Maistre says, in a letter to his daughter, of easy methods of learning languages, "They are pure illusions. There are no easy methods of learning difficult things. The only method is to shut one's door, to give out that one is not at home, and *to work*." When Madame de Staël was introduced to the German metaphysician, Schelling, she said to him: "*Monsieur, voudriez-vous bien m'expliquer*



*votre système en peu de mots ?*” Persons who think themselves entitled to laugh at this voluble Frenchwoman, who in conversation, as Goethe complained, “never granted, on the most important topics, a moment of reflection, but passionately demanded that we should despatch the deepest concerns as lightly as if it were a game of shuttle-cock,” and who evidently thought a quarter of an hour sufficient for an exposition of Schelling’s system of philosophy, will yet think they can master a difficult subject by listening to a few lectures.

How did Porson, the giant of classical erudition, become the scholar and critic he was? “I have made myself what I am,” said he, “by intense labor. Sometimes, in order to impress a thing upon my memory, I have read it a dozen times, and transcribed it six.” By what magic art did Claude Lorraine, apprenticed in youth to a pastry-cook, become a matchless painter? By being a most assiduous student of nature, — sitting whole days watching a scene, and studying the effects of light at different hours and seasons, and by combining with consummate taste the picturesque materials thus gathered together, and poetizing or idealizing them by his exquisite imagination.

Again, how did the Count de Montalembert, the eloquent champion of democracy and the Catholic Church, and the impassioned opponent of the dogma of papal infallibility, acquire his electrical oratory? Let M. Cochin answer. Speaking of the preparation of Montalembert’s speeches — for which and their delivery he subjected himself in youth to a laborious training — his biographer says: “His way of working resembled, if I may be permitted so familiar an expression, a vintage. When he had sought out, carefully noted, detached, and accumulated an enormous quantity of

facts, ideas, or information, as the vintager fills his basket with innumerable bunches of grapes, then, furnished with this booty and the spoils of his researches, he arranged his materials in groups and submitted them to a laborious process of meditation, as to the wheel of a wine-press; and it was not until he had subjected his abundant harvest to this new process, that he allowed the generous wine of his eloquence to flow forth in rapid waves."

**Genius and Enthusiasm.** Is enthusiasm a characteristic of genius? The popular idea is expressed by Disraeli when he says that every production of genius is the production of this mental gift; but is this true? Does not that unqualified rapture which confuses the value of things, ignores their shades of difference, and is an obstacle to all sensible criticism and all calm judgment, indicate but a second-rate mind? Are not great works, whether in poetry, painting, literature, or war, invariably the result of profound reflection, knowledge, and calculation; and do they not require, too, profound reflection for their appreciation, a state of mind which is the very opposite of ecstasy or rapture? "Enthusiasm," says Kant, "is always connected with the senses, whatever be the object that excites it. The true strength of virtue is serenity of mind, combined with a deliberate and steadfast determination to execute her laws. That is the healthful condition of moral life; on the other hand, enthusiasm, even when excited by representations of goodness, is a brilliant but feverish glow, which leaves only exhaustion and languor behind."

The greatest geniuses that the world has seen have been calm, self-controlled, and unimpassioned. Hannibal, Cæsar, Wallenstein, Marlborough, Wellington, Grant,

were cool, imperturbable, self-possessed. Napoleon was as cold in manner, while prosecuting his schemes, as if he had had a heart of stone. He was a man of boundless ambition, reckless of the sufferings of his fellow-beings, and prodigal of their lives; but in his character there was not a particle of romance. His genius and ambition, gigantic and unparalleled as they were, were the trained and disciplined agents of a thoughtful and calculating self-love. He was capable of anger, but, as Lanfrey truly observes, as entire a stranger to hatred as to sympathy; he was governed only by calculation. His very heroism was more of a mathematical principle than a fervent impulse; and when he most startled the world into trembling admiration, he was but working out an answer to some deeply pondered problem of self-aggrandizement. "Men, with their physical and moral force, their bodily energies, and their passions, prejudices, delusions, and enthusiasms, were to him but as fuel to swell the blaze on that altar of ambition, of which he himself was at once the priest and the deity. Of duties to them he never for a moment dreamed; for, from the hot May-day of Lodi to the autumnal night of Moscow, when he fled the flaming Kremlin, he seemed unconscious that he was himself a created and responsible being."

**The Poetry of Steam.** To a poetic, imaginative mind there are few of the lauded improvements of this age of utilitarianism and progress that are fitted to yield pleasure. It is with a sigh that such a one reflects that the useful, in these days of startling and ever-multiplying inventions, can often consist only with the destruction of the

picturesque and beautiful. Steam-pipes and furnaces warm our houses thoroughly; but have they the charm of the blazing open fire, which warms the heart as well as the body, and the bare mention of which conjures up a thousand pleasing recollections? Information is so widely diffused as to be almost a drug; science has set bounds to romance, and rendered fancy ridiculous; but is man happier, now that the world is plotted out and turned into real estate, — that Prospero's island is a naval station, and the forest of Ardennes a lumber region? Ghosts are now secured by patent, and produced by machinery; but have they the heart-shaking power of those that visited the couch of Richard III., and froze the blood of Macbeth? The electric telegraph, which wafts intelligence with lightning-like speed, — shaming almost the boast of Puck that he would girdle the earth “in forty minutes,” — is a wonder-working contrivance; but is it so grand and striking as the beacon-fires which, according to Æschylus, lighted from hill-top to hill-top, announced the taking of Troy and the return of Agamemnon? Many persons think that the sublimest object in nature is a ship winging its way over the ocean; but even this, in Hazlitt's estimation, was more than paralleled in grandeur by the mail-coaches that in his time poured down Piccadilly of an evening, tearing up the pavement, and devouring the way before them to the Land's End, — a sight which, in these days of the iron horse, bids fair to disappear ere long from men's eyes.

We deeply sympathize with Hazlitt's feelings, but, with all our love for old institutions, we are not so blindly attached to them as to see no poetry in modern ones. Dearly as we love the old stage-coach, with its fleet and smoking



steeds bounding up hill, over plain and down valley, yet many pleasing and romantic associations cluster, too, in our mind about the iron horse. True, his shrill, unearthly scream — that scream which, according to Sam Weller, seems to say, “Now here’s two hundred and forty passengers in the werry greatest extremity of danger, and here’s their two hundred and forty screams in vun” — is not captivating. His broken-winded puffs, the sooty cinders he leaves in his track, and the rattling of the carriages which he hurries over the rails, are not fitted to kindle the imagination; nor is the confused, jumbled medley into which his arrow-like flight huddles all the features of the landscape, very pleasing to the eye. But, then, with what velocity he bears the impatient business man to his destination, or the homesick traveller to the arms that are aching to embrace him! It is the nearest approach yet known to the wishing-cap of the Oriental tale, which enabled its wearer to fly in an instant to any desired spot on the globe. Certainly the winged horse, of the muses never made such time in his flights over Parnassus, as the coal-fed, steam-breathing monster, with pulses of fire and sinews of steel, makes over his iron pathway. Then, again, how beautiful to the looker-on is the spectacle of a railway train, as it shoots by him with a swiftness that renders its inmates invisible! How like an effect of enchantment or some magical illusion it seems, as it rushes along its sinuous way among mountains and forests, darting across rivers, spanning abysses, surmounting or piercing hills, and flying on and yet on to its destination as unerringly as a migratory bird flies toward the pole!

Truly there is poetry in the iron horse, — more of the



poetry of motion than in the bound of an antelope, more of the poetry of power than in the dash of a cataract. Fact, in our times, has overtaken fancy, and we need no longer seek for the sublime in creations which are imaginary and untrue. "Look," says an eloquent writer, "at the railway train at night, with its spangled banner of smoke trailing far into the distance! Can any imagery be more picturesque? None, — not even the demon yagers of the Hartz Forest, sweeping through the air on their midnight chase. To us the rush of steam on its swift and glorious errands, with the population of a village at its heels, seems as well calculated to awaken poetic inspiration as any of the stupid fables of heathen mythology." The writer might have added that such a spectacle is far better fitted to kindle the imagination than the most felicitous of these fables, when we reflect that that complex fabric, the steam-engine, the masterpiece of modern art and science, was once the laughing-stock of jeering thousands, and once but the phantasy of a boy's mind, as he sat before a fire, and, in seeming idleness, watched a column of vapor rising from the spout of a teakettle.

**Facts not** Is knowledge power, as it is so often asserted  
**Faculty.** to be? That "depends." All the facts the memory can hold cannot of themselves make a man wise. He may have a head crammed with them, and yet, if they are not organized into faculty, remain a feeble, shallow, and conceited man. Facts, of themselves, are worthless; it is only in their associations, consequences, and bearings on each other, — only as, acted upon by the mind, they support or refute systems and theories, — only, in short,

as they become the generators of ideas,—that they have any value. Suppose a lecturer tells me that a certain quartz stone is round; he has increased my knowledge by two facts, the nature and form of the stone; but of what value are these facts in themselves? Have they made me intellectually stronger, or a bit the wiser? Assuredly not. But, as a key to an aqueous theory of geology, they may be of infinite moment. If, perceiving that the round stone must have been once an angular fragment, broken off from some rock of quartz, I am led to ask: “How came it to break off?” and “How came it to be round?” the answers may be a whole system of geology,—perhaps an entire system of the universe. In short, it is not in the number of facts which one has acquired, that his mental power lies, but in the number he can bring to bear on a given subject, and in his ability to treat them as data or factors of a new product, in an endless series. Though there must be data before there can be generalization, yet, as Herbert Spencer says, “ungeneralized data, accumulated in excess, are impediments to generalization.”

When does a man understand a truth? Never fully, till he has discovered it for himself; otherwise, it may lodge in his mind, but has no home there. Doubtless the dullest man in the community, by simply opening a scientific treatise, may learn a thousand things unknown to Aristotle or Bacon. But a few easy acquisitions from a book will not lessen the distance between a modern dunce and an ancient sage. A dwarf perched on a giant's shoulder may see further than the giant, but he is a dwarf still. The acute and patient thinker of the dark ages, who never suspected that the atmosphere in which he lived had

weight, was nevertheless a philosopher of profound understanding; while he whose lecturer has taught him *ex cathedra* that the atmosphere presses with a weight of fifteen pounds to the square inch, may, notwithstanding the superiority of his information, remain a feeble-minded, shallow man.

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